



# 原始獸記 5

Yuan Shi zhan ji

陳詞懶調





# Chronicles of Primordial Wars 1 to 100

---

- Chapter 1 – The Person in Front, Your Pants Are Slipping
- Chapter 2 – Such a Plain life
- Chapter 3 – Old Rivals
- Chapter 4 – Children from the cave are so horrifying
- Chapter 5 – Are you f\*\*king kidding me?
- Chapter 6 – Troublesome
- Chapter 7 – Peculiar Fish
- Chapter 8 – The most beautiful word in the world
- Chapter 9 – We believe in whatever you say, as long as it's good
- Chapter 10 – Follow me and get meat in return
- Chapter 11 Recording and counting numbers
- Chapter 12 – Beat them up
- Chapter 13 – Mo-Er
- Chapter 14 – Stoneware Crafter
- Chapter 15 – He's always up to something, just like you
- Chapter 16 – Winter is coming
- Chapter 17 – Fresco
- Chapter 18 – Thumbs up
- Chapter 19 – Moons came out
- Chapter 20 – The color of wildness
- Chapter 21 – You are burning
- Chapter 22 – The flame doesn't harm anyone
- Chapter 23 – Changes
- Chapter 24 – What's your name?
- Chapter 25 – Source of Power
- Chapter 26 – Incomplete Flame
- Chapter 27 – One day we will host a Potlatch

- Chapter 28 – I want to learn stone crafting
- Chapter 29 – Artistic crafting skills
- Chapter 30 – Ke's Gift
- Chapter 31 – Simple and crude
- Chapter 32 – Glory Road
- Chapter 33 – The length of a finger
- Chapter 34 – Change of style
- Chapter 35 – Not too bad, huh?
- Chapter 36 – Come and punch me
- Chapter 37 – Ground komodo tooth sabre
- Chapter 38 – Preparation
- Chapter 39 – Setting off
- Chapter 40 – Entering
- Chapter 41 – Black wind
- Chapter 42 – Wild boar
- Chapter 43 – Advanced prey
- Chapter 44 – Curious
- Chapter 45 – Creatures outside the cave
- Chapter 46 – Pale faces
- Chapter 47 – Nasty environment
- Chapter 48 – Either you die, or I die
- Chapter 49 – Avalanche
- Chapter 50 – Sunrise
- Chapter 51 – Just one touch
- Chapter 52 – All three
- Chapter 53 – Wild Wolves
- Chapter 54 – Stone worm below the mountain
- Chapter 55 – So unlucky
- Chapter 56 – The King Stone Worm
- Chapter 57 – Intuition
- Chapter 58 – The skeletons in the cave
- Chapter 59 – Getting out of the mountain
- Chapter 60 – Don't get so worked up! Let's talk like adults!
- Chapter 61 – Die without regrets

- Chapter 62 – Returning home
- Chapter 63 – Sword Cleansing Ritual
- Chapter 64 – The position of the totem pattern
- Chapter 65 – The Elder
- Chapter 66 – Do you know the meaning behind my name?
- Chapter 67 – Training
- Chapter 68 – A good hound serves as the hunter's eyes and ears
- Chapter 69 – Joining the advance group
- Chapter 70 – You just rest assured
- Chapter 71 – Continue on
- Chapter 72 – Aircraft fleet
- Chapter 73 – Feeling small
- Chapter 74 – The Jumping Fruit Tree
- Chapter 75 – White hairs
- Chapter 76 – Playing a small role
- Chapter 77 – Pictures at the end of the scroll
- Chapter 78 – The Green Thief marches at night
- Chapter 79 – Fire Lance
- Chapter 80 – Falling into the trap
- Chapter 81 – Massacre
- Chapter 82 – The bird eggs
- Chapter 83 – Going back
- Chapter 84 – Coming home
- Chapter 85 – Breaking through it's shell
- Chapter 86 – A fighting chicken
- Chapter 87 – The Shaman's blessing
- Chapter 88 – The river beast "Dread"
- Chapter 89 – The fish fence
- Chapter 90 – Don't move!
- Chapter 91 – Changes in the rainy season
- Chapter 92 – Boomerang
- Chapter 93 – The overlapping of the two moons
- Chapter 94 – Speculation
- Chapter 95 – Intention

- Chapter 96 – A present for the Shaman
- Chapter 97 – That turtle
- Chapter 98 – The pictures in the animal skin rolls
- Chapter 99 – The Shaman Volumes
- Chapter 100 – Do you want to be the Shaman?

1. Chapter 1 – The Person in Front, Your Pants Are Slipping
2. Chapter 2 – Such a Plain life
3. Chapter 3 – Old Rivals
4. Chapter 4 – Children from the cave are so horrifying
5. Chapter 5 – Are you f\*\*king kidding me?
6. Chapter 6 – Troublesome
7. Chapter 7 – Peculiar Fish
8. Chapter 8 – The most beautiful word in the world
9. Chapter 9 – We believe in whatever you say, as long as it's good
10. Chapter 10 – Follow me and get meat in return
11. Chapter 11 Recording and counting numbers
12. Chapter 12 – Beat them up
13. Chapter 13 – Mo-Er
14. Chapter 14 – Stoneware Crafter
15. Chapter 15 – He's always up to something, just like you
16. Chapter 16 – Winter is coming
17. Chapter 17 – Fresco
18. Chapter 18 – Thumbs up
19. Chapter 19 – Moons came out
20. Chapter 20 – The color of wildness
21. Chapter 21 – You are burning
22. Chapter 22 – The flame doesn't harm anyone
23. Chapter 23 – Changes
24. Chapter 24 – What's your name?
25. Chapter 25 – Source of Power
26. Chapter 26 – Incomplete Flame
27. Chapter 27 – One day we will host a Potlatch

28. Chapter 28 – I want to learn stone crafting
29. Chapter 29 – Artistic crafting skills
30. Chapter 30 – Ke's Gift
31. Chapter 31 – Simple and crude
32. Chapter 32 – Glory Road
33. Chapter 33 – The length of a finger
34. Chapter 34 – Change of style
35. Chapter 35 – Not too bad, huh?
36. Chapter 36 – Come and punch me
37. Chapter 37 – Ground komodo tooth sabre
38. Chapter 38 – Preparation
39. Chapter 39 – Setting off
40. Chapter 40 – Entering
41. Chapter 41 – Black wind
42. Chapter 42 – Wild boar
43. Chapter 43 – Advanced prey
44. Chapter 44 – Curious
45. Chapter 45 – Creatures outside the cave
46. Chapter 46 – Pale faces
47. Chapter 47 – Nasty environment
48. Chapter 48 – Either you die, or I die
49. Chapter 49 – Avalanche
50. Chapter 50 – Sunrise
51. Chapter 51 – Just one touch
52. Chapter 52 – All three
53. Chapter 53 – Wild Wolves
54. Chapter 54 – Stone worm below the mountain
55. Chapter 55 – So unlucky
56. Chapter 56 – The King Stone Worm
57. Chapter 57 – Intuition
58. Chapter 58 – The skeletons in the cave
59. Chapter 59 – Getting out of the mountain
60. Chapter 60 – Don't get so worked up! Let's talk like adults!
61. Chapter 61 – Die without regrets



62. Chapter 62 – Returning home
63. Chapter 63 – Sword Cleansing Ritual
64. Chapter 64 – The position of the totem pattern
65. Chapter 65 – The Elder
66. Chapter 66 – Do you know the meaning behind my name?
67. Chapter 67 – Training
68. Chapter 68 – A good hound serves as the hunter's eyes and ears
69. Chapter 69 – Joining the advance group
70. Chapter 70 – You just rest assured
71. Chapter 71 – Continue on
72. Chapter 72 – Aircraft fleet
73. Chapter 73 – Feeling small
74. Chapter 74 – The Jumping Fruit Tree
75. Chapter 75 – White hairs
76. Chapter 76 – Playing a small role
77. Chapter 77 – Pictures at the end of the scroll
78. Chapter 78 – The Green Thief marches at night
79. Chapter 79 – Fire Lance
80. Chapter 80 – Falling into the trap
81. Chapter 81 – Massacre
82. Chapter 82 – The bird eggs
83. Chapter 83 – Going back
84. Chapter 84 – Coming home
85. Chapter 85 – Breaking through it's shell
86. Chapter 86 – A fighting chicken
87. Chapter 87 – The Shaman's blessing
88. Chapter 88 – The river beast "Dread"
89. Chapter 89 – The fish fence
90. Chapter 90 – Don't move!
91. Chapter 91 – Changes in the rainy season
92. Chapter 92 – Boomerang
93. Chapter 93 – The overlapping of the two moons
94. Chapter 94 – Speculation
95. Chapter 95 – Intention

96. Chapter 96 – A present for the Shaman
97. Chapter 97 – That turtle
98. Chapter 98 – The pictures in the animal skin rolls
99. Chapter 99 – The Shaman Volumes
100. Chapter 100 – Do you want to be the Shaman?

## Prologue

Shao Xuan sat in a remodeled bus and looked at the multitudinous mountains outside the window. Summer Solstice had just passed and the mountains were brimming with greens that burst with life. Seeing such a scene after living long in the city made his mood—despondent due to failures—quite brighter. Initially, Shao Xuan planned to call up a few friends for a journey far away to unwind his heart, but he didn't expect to come across his fellow townmate and classmate who studied archeology, Shi Qi, who then pulled him over for an archaeology trip.

Now, they were heading towards a relatively remote small mountain village. It was said that things of the Stone Age were discovered there. A batch of people had already set off for that location, and currently, they were in the second batch.

Shao Xuan listened to his classmate start from the primitive humans' skull, to the stone tools they used, to the murals on rocks. He even took out a few pictures and explained them in detail—the researchers did this and that . . . after drilling in, it was hard to pull it back out . . . Although Shao Xuan didn't understand a thing, he still gave face to him and listened attentively.

On the paper were murals that archaeologists had discovered. Shao Xuan glimpsed at them, and felt they were no better than his nephews' and nieces' who had yet to even enter kindergarten.

The lines on the drawings were rather simple—for most of them, one could tell they were people who held tools for hunting, as well a few drawings of various species of animals. For the rest, however, he did not have a clue what they were.

"This is a drawing of a goat? But this goat drawing is too big," Shao Xuan said as he pointed at a picture.

On the picture, the drawing was a goat with a very long and large curved horn. By its side, there was a person holding a bow and arrows. Yet, the ratio did not seem normal. The head of the person reached only up to the goat's back. A few other pictures were the same: a rabbit's body proportion was akin to a lion, and on the left, there was even a picture of a horse, though its tail was

drawn perhaps a bit too short.

Of course, not every single drawing's ratio was like that. The different era's mural styles discovered in different provinces were all distinct. At the back, the ratios were drawn a bit more like reality. On the drawings, you could even see a group of people bringing dogs for hunting.

He continued flipping back, and found several coloured drawings, giving an even clearer look to them.

"Hoh, this drawing is even more ridiculous. The antler is too large! And this person . . . The person in the drawing just now only reached the goat's back, yet in this drawing, the person only reaches the height of this deer's leg! What's that in the bottom-right corner . . . An eight-legged alligator?!" Shao Xuan could not admire the style of the primitive humans' drawing.

"They may not have put much emphasis on things like these," Shi Qi explained.

"You mean that when they draw, they did not have any realism in terms of proportion, and instead used exaggerated methods?" Shao Xuan asked.

"It should be like that." Shi Qi scratched his head. "After all, in that time period, humans were not too educated in beauty. The drawings may only represent some sort of symbolic meaning. There was once a researcher who, when studying the murals, hypothesized that the reason why humans back then drew these hunting-related murals on cave walls or boulders was to let the tribe's hunters or warriors have an idea in their hearts before heading out. Or, perhaps there was a ceremony we don't know of—especially so for the murals drawn by those 'shamans'."

"Shamans huh . . ." In Shao Xuan's mind, an image of a very odd and old swindler appeared.

"Ahh, why do you have such a face? Let me tell you this: 'shamans' back then did not necessarily hold low positions in human tribes. Quite oppositely, it's very possible they held high ones."

"I know. Swindlers, right?" Shao Xuan nodded.

Shi Qi waved his finger left and right, then took out a folder. In it were some

copies of scanned drawings. As he pointed at some of the drawings and characters, Shi Qi said to Shao Xuan, “If the appearance of totems is humans’ personification of nature and their own collective unity, that means the thoughts of shamans are humans’ naturalization. The occupation of ‘shaman’ has actually already appeared in the Stone Age . . .”

Shi Qi then started to talk about the development of the occupation of “shaman” from the ancient times to the present ones—without caring about Shao Xuan. The usage of specialized jargon and even quoting various classics and works, causing Shao Xuan who was listening to have a headache.

Shao Xuan did not have too great of an understanding in that field, nor did he feel interest. If he didn’t have an old townmate and classmate who studied archaeology, Shao Xuan would have simply not bothered knowing anything of those things. Before, when he heard people talk about archaeology, he immediately thought of those priceless antiques. However, the direction of study Shi Qi took was simply more antique than antiques! It was so ancient that not many people felt interest towards the topic. Several days ago, Shao Xuan was even listening to the broadcast’s discussion on whether “Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution” was correct, or “the hypothesis on ‘aliens created life-forms’” was correct. Since he had nothing better to do, Shao Xuan gave it a listen. After doing so, he put it aside and did not study it any further.

On the contrary, Shao Xuan knew he had interest in ancient human species from a young age. Back then, during middle school, he often had discussions with others regarding several excavated yet disappeared ancient human species remains in recent modern history.

“You won’t understand if I speak professionally, so I’ll go simpler! Look!” Shi Qi used his finger to point at a map on a certain location. “‘Shaman’ is mentioned in ancient inscriptions on things such as cow bones, turtle shells, and bronze. But, it’s like this . . .”

Shao Xuan looked at the place Shi Qi pointed towards. It was a symbol, looking akin to the interweaving of two “work” (工) characters.

“On a few ancient potteries and statues, this double-work symbol has appeared. On that topic, shamans also affected areas such as hunting, praying,

and rescuing. Looking at it in certain perspectives, ‘shamans’ can be counted as the scientists of that time. However, all of this is speculation. Even if it’s records from ancient times, they may not be true. After all, they loved to exaggerate. Isn’t there a saying that goes ‘There is never truth in history.’? Archaeology is merely digging up a few corners and edges. As for the truth, who knows.

“The discovered cave this time is also related to ‘shamans’. The final few pictures you saw were the murals the first batch of people sent back. In the cave, the double-work symbol was also discovered. So, we can speculate that it may be a certain ‘shaman’’s residential area. Last month, a brief earthquake occurred in that village’s region. Most likely, due to that, this cave was exposed. Before the earthquake, not a single person had heard of it.”

When he spoke up to there, Shi Qi closed the folder and carefully looked at his surroundings. Seeing that the instructor and other students were not paying attention at them, he lowered his voice, and secretively said to Shao Xuan, “I’ve heard the first person who discovered the cave was a child. Moreover, from a fellow student’s news, the child who discovered the cave saw a strange watermelon-sized insect crawling out from his courtyard’s wall. Children have great nerves, so that child followed the insect. In the end, it disappeared at the cave; the child went back, notifying adults, and only then was the cave discovered.”

“Watermelon-sized insect?” Shao Xuan felt it to be ridiculous. Regardless of who, when they heard that the first time, they would think it was overly fake. “That child lied?”

Shi Qi shook his head. “The strange thing is, according to the first batch of people who went there, that there are ancient life-form fossils in the rocks used to construct the courtyard’s walls.” Shi Qi paused, rubbed the goose bumps on his arm, then continued, “There are fossils of ancient organisms in the rock which spawned a watermelon-sized insect, as shown by the child who discovered the cave. However, it was not complete. It was only a portion of the remains. But even so, according to the researchers’ theories, if that organism were still living, it could indeed be as big as a watermelon. Moreover, its appearance would also be quite close to the child’s descriptions.”

“ . . . It sounds incredible; however, was the child the only one who saw it,

and others didn't see insects crawling out of their walls?" Shao Xuan was a bit drawn in.

Shi Qi shook his head. "I don't know. Let's go ask in a while when we get there. We're almost there anyway."

When the group of people arrived at their destination, it was already noon, 11 o'clock. Shao Xuan followed Shi Qi and the others and ate a simple lunch, then returned to the bus.

Shi Qi and the others were already impatient. After eating, they did not rest and planned to immediately start working.

Shi Qi had already told Shao Xuan the things he needed to pay heed to: which things couldn't be touched, which places couldn't be gone to, who to find when he needed someone, *etc.* Shao Xuan had a plan in his heart.

"I'll talk to you after work today. Take a scroll by yourself for now! The scenery in this place is quite nice: green mountains, blue skies and waters . . . Clean out your lungs after staying in the smoggy city!"

After speaking Shi Qi took his tools and followed his instructor. Shao Xuan was not allowed in that place, but he did not have much interest going there regardless.

Only Shao Xuan was left in the bus. After closing the windows and doors of the buss, it was fairly quiet. In the past few days, Shao Xuan hadn't gotten good sleep, and on the road, he was listening to Shi Qi's narrations. Now that it was silent, he was sleepy.

When he woke up, it was nearly 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Shao Xuan planned to head out for a walk. Just as he planned to do that, he saw Shi Qi in work clothes walking over. He went in the buss and grabbed a document. Afterwards, he continued to hurry over and work.

However, before leaving the bus, Shi Qi took out a chicken egg-sized stone and threw it to Shao Xuan. "I picked it up from the cave, and as they weren't paying attention, I grabbed it. It shouldn't be anything important. I cannot give you 'antiques', but regardless, this stone was still found in the cave. It even looks quite smooth! Someone probably threw it over there, but I'll give it to you

as a remembrance.”

The stone was found near the cave entrance, and was some distance away from the core of the cave. The quality of the stone was also clearly different from the other objects dug out, and there lacked any marks on it. So, the people who came in the first batch focused on the murals and Stone Age’s “antiques”. No one cared about the piece of stone near the cave entrance, and for the sake of amusement, Shi Qi smoothly obtained it.

After catching the thrown stone, Shao Xuan looked at it carefully in his hand. The feeling of it was no different from other stones—dark-green, chicken egg-shaped, a rather sleek surface, as if it were polished carefully. There was nothing odd at a first glance, and even though it wasn’t any “antique”, it was decent as a small toy, or as an ornament.

Shao Xuan did not mind it. After playing around with it in his hands for a while, he felt that the stone could not be warmed up. After a dozen or so minutes in his hands, it was still quite cool. Thinking about it, Shao Xuan took out a lighter and used fire to burn the stone. Logically speaking, the places that the flames came in contact to should be slightly scorching. But the reality was after burning, it was still as cool as before.

Sweeping his gaze at his surroundings, Shao Xuan took a fruit knife from the table and laid a piece of paper. He planned to use the knife to scrape off a few bits and take it to the archaeology bus and ask someone to help him examine it. However, after scraping the stone with the knife, not even the faintest of traces were left behind. There was not even a scratch from jabbing it with the tip of the knife.

Cannot be heated by fire, cannot be marked by a knife . . . It was truly an odd stone.

Shao Xuan walked down the bus with the stone, planning to let Shi Qi look at it carefully later.

The bus stopped at a fairly close distance from the village. It was just that the road was not too suitable for walking.

Some of the villagers in the village had went to work, and those a bit more leisure went to the newly discovered cave for the liveliness. As such, when Shao



Xuan entered the village, he only saw a few people walking around.

Around the village was a two-meter tall wall made from rock and dirt. It was said to be built several dozens of years ago for protection against wild beasts. The rocks came from the mountain; however, there weren't many large beasts recently, so no one paid any more attention to the stone wall.

Glancing at it, he could see the wall's large pieces of rocks. It had a long history, bringing about a feeling of desolation.

Shao Xuan played around with the stone in his hand, his eyes staring at it. Hearing about the discovery of ancient organism fossils in the walls' rocks, Shao Xuan recalled the "watermelon-sized insect" Shi Qi spoke of.

He was just planning to shift his gaze away when suddenly, Shao Xuan saw a snake-like thing appear on the wall. It was even squirming around. As thick as a small water tank, and its scale-like patterns emitted a cold glint. It was several meters away, but Shao Xuan felt a chill go down his spine, and all his hair stand on end. It frightened him so much he almost leaped into the air. Yet, when Shao Xuan blinked and looked back, he discovered absolutely nothing. The rock wall was still the broken rock wall that took many years of beating from the weather.

Illusion?

Shao Xuan looked at the other places of the wall. Afterwards, his line of sight fell upon a hole in the wall. There was a large rock over there, left behind after the wall at that area collapsed. The small parts were taken by the villagers back home to build their own walls, the larger ones were left, untouched. And, at that moment, Shao Xuan saw a green-coloured sprout pop up from the rock. The sprout quickly bud leaves and grew tall. At the same time, several vines extended outward towards all directions. The initially three-meter tall hole was instantly veiled by the vines and leaves. A fragrance belonging to plants even permeated the air.

Shao Xuan took several steps back, breathing deeply. Focusing his eyes and looking back, he discovered the vines and branches had disappeared. The rock wall was same as usual, but the ground was full of the large smooth stones.

Feeling some strange movement in his hand, Shao Xuan looked down at the

stone.

The stone that could not be heat up nor could be scratched became sand in a split moment. They slipped through the gaps between Shao Xuan's fingers

When the final speck of sand fell, Shao Xuan's vision went pitch-black.

# Chapter 1 – The Person in Front, Your Pants Are Slipping

---

In a cave, lying down everywhere in disorder were twenty children. A layer of thin, ragged hide covered around seven children. The others who weren't covered by the hide either had their own, or they had to shrink in a ball at the side. But no matter if they were covered or shrunk into a ball, they sleep very soundly.

Since it hadn't been cleaned in a long time and there were many people sleeping, there was a very heavy stench lingering about the cave. In their surroundings, there were bore air vents, allowing sunlight to enter, which barely permitted some light in the dark cave.

Underneath the air vent, on one side of the cave, a young child clad in torn tide was sleeping there. However, he was different from the others. There was also a large dog that slept by his side, nearly the same size as him.

Shao Xuan opened his eyes. Seeing the sunlight that had already shone to his shoulders, he rubbed his eyes, crawled up, and tidied up the dry grass laid underneath him. Seeing Shao Xuan actions, the large dog with initially closed eyes quickly rose and obediently knelt by his side so as to let Shao Xuan pick up the dry grass it was just on.

After bundling the grass together, Shao Xuan walked out of the cave with one hand holding the bundle of dry grass, and the other holding the dog leash, which was made out of rope.

Arriving at such a primitive tribe-like area in such an ineffable manner, becoming a small brat in the tribe located in the desolate wilderness. This body was very weak, as it likely hadn't been able to heal from an illness. Ever since Shao Xuan woke up from that body, over half a year had passed. Even if he

didn't get used to it, he could only grit his teeth and bear with it. Only survival was the most important.

Shao Xuan never would have expected to truly come to a place like that. There were great differences from the primitive tribes of the Stone Age he had learnt from before when it was compared to this. Their appearances did not look anything special, but their essence was different.

Have you ever seen an ordinary person carrying a small water tank—sized rock with a single hand scrolling around aimlessly on the streets?

Have you ever seen an ordinary person jump three stories high—without the assistance of any tool—and stand stably after jumping down from a ten-meter tall tree?

Shao Xuan had never seen that in his past life, but in this one . . . he sees it every day!

As for the cave he just came out of, its original name was “Lying Down Cow Cave” because the appearance of the cave was like a cow that was lying down. It was named by the tribe’s “shaman” back then; however, a thousand years had since passed. As the years and months replaced one another, the tribe, as it reproduced, built houses outside the cave. As a result, the cave was used as a place for orphans that were taken in by the tribe. Henceforth, it was named as the “Children’s Cave” by the tribe’s people. The children who lived inside had no parents to take care of them, nor were there anyone in the tribe who were willing to take them in as their own. So, all in all, the “Children’s Cave” was the tribe’s orphanage.

After Shao Xuan arrived at that place, he hadn't seen people from other tribes. Which meant in the vicinity of their mountain range, there was only one tribe, their “Flaming Horn” tribe.

In the isolated tribe, it was a life of self-sufficiency.

Whilst pulling the dog, Shao Xuan walked about in leisure.

Shortly after, he saw an incongruously sized wooden house. Some of its components were also wood combined with things such as rocks, grass, and dirt. In comparison to the one before, this one, made of wood and rocks, was

slightly larger, and it looked also a bit sturdier. That house could be counted as a mansion, located near the foot of the mountain.

But no matter if it was the wooden houses or the wooden and rock “mansions”, in Shao Xuan’s eyes, they were constructions that were horrendously simple. However, after staying there for such a long time, Shao Xuan did yearn for a wooden house that belonged to himself. But, that stage could not be realized.

At that time, there were already people starting to move about. The men had already took out their stone tools for grinding so it’d be more convenient the next time they went hunting with already sharpened stone knives. The women too had their own work—sewing hides, drying foods, *etc.*

When Shao Xuan passed, quite a few people’s gazes looked over. Not at Shao Xuan, but at the organism Shao Xuan was pulling. In their eyes were drooling and greed as they swallowed their saliva. In their perspective, Shao Xuan was pulling a huge chunk of meat, enough for them to have several meals. The eyes of those who woke up early to work yet still had an empty stomach turned green; however, after they saw the thing worn around its neck, they—unwillingly—endured their longing to take the wolf away. That was the Marking Tile of the “shaman”, meaning it belonged to the shaman. They did not dare to touch it. In their eyes, Shao Xuan was also merely helping the shaman to look after the wolf.

Yes, it was actually a wolf by Shao Xuan’s side. It was born within the mountain ranges, but when it was young, a warrior hunting from the tribe found it. He brought it back so Shao Xuan could eat it, but coincidentally, the tribe’s shaman passed by, left a Marking Tile that had the marking of a shaman, then departed. Shao Xuan named the wolf “Caesar”, the name in which Shao Xuan named his former life’s dog. He raised Caesar like he did a dog, all the way up until the present.

The thoughts of the people there were very odd. Clearly, they respected the shaman quite a bit, yet their attitude when facing Shao Xuan did not change much even after seeing the shaman giving a Marking Tile to Shao Xuan. The only thing different was them holding out on their desire to cut Caesar up and eat it. As for the other areas, they did nothing more than what they’d usually

do. After all, the shaman did not tell everyone to help Shao Xuan. Where would such a grand character such as the shaman have time to pay attention to a child? As time passed, all of them got used to a child that had a wolf. And, ever since Caesar was a wolf cub who didn't even have a complete row of teeth, the shaman hadn't appeared again.

But what made the people near the foot of mountain baffled was why did Shao Xuan call Caesar a dog?

And, what was a dog?

However, that question did not linger for long because no one paid attention to it. They didn't bother paying attention to it, as they were busy focusing on other things—food.

Shao Xuan was already used to the surrounding gazes. As though nothing were happening, he continued pulling Caesar and walking. Even if the tribe's people were greedy, they would not go and rob the shaman's things. As Shi Qi had said: shamans' position in tribes was very high. As for why the person residing on the mountain's "area for influential people", the shaman whose position was the highest—or second-highest—in the tribe, would give Shao Xuan, who slept in the "Children's Cave"—a very lowly existence—such an important Marking Tile, it was due to a term Shao Xuan mentioned back then—"raise". Originally, Shao Xuan said back then to raise the little wolf cub Caesar before eating it, and coincidentally, the shaman heard those words. He allowed Shao Xuan to raise it, and in order to prevent the others in the tribe from taking it away, the shaman left a Marking Tile for Shao Xuan, which was put over his neck.

The "shaman" had great interest in raising, but in over half a year, the old man hadn't even appeared once. As a result, the impression Shao Xuan had on the old man was—an irresponsible old swindler. Was it easy raising a wolf? Every day, he was being glared at by the people surrounding him. Without a powerful mental endurance, he would have already gone insane.

In short, raising Caesar was completely because of a coincidence.

How difficult was life! Although the tribe took care of the food issue in the Children's Cave, he was still hungry.

Shao Xuan helplessly sighed. He looked forward, then the corners of his eyes twitched.

Before him, on his shoulder, a person was holding a stone club—two meters long in the shape of a baseball bat, yet a lot thicker. That was really quite heavy, and according to Shao Xuan's past life's standards, even if he could lift it up it would be very tiring. Yet, that person seemed to hold it as effortlessly as holding an ordinary hoe. With yawns, he languidly walked on the mountain, probably heading to the hunter group in order to discuss the matter of hunting.

That as a normal person in this place. As for Shao Xuan, he belonged in the weak collection of people who hadn't have their Power of Totem awakened. When he reached around ten years old, his Power of Totem would be awakened, and only then would be count as an ordinary warrior who had the ability to hunt outside. The Power of Totem was the only level of measure that determined if one were able to become a hunting warrior or not in the tribe.

As for what exactly was the Power of Totem, Shao Xuan did not know. Perhaps he would understand when the time comes.

At that instant, the uncle before Shao Xuan who was carrying a stone club with an appearance of sleepiness had simply not seen the hide he wore as shorts nearly slid down to his knees. In broad daylight, he continued scroll about as though nothing were wrong. There were no reactions from the surrounding people when they saw it either.

Shao Xuan held it in, but ultimately, still said, "The Uncle who's carrying a club in front, your pants are slipping!"

Only after Shao Xuan's third yell did the person in front of him turn around with a yawn. He glanced over Shao Xuan, his line of sight pausing on Caesar for around half a minute, then looked down at his slid pants. Afterwards, he calmly pulled them up, fastened the belt, and continued walking towards the mountain with the club on his shoulder.

Shao Xuan no longer said anything.

In the perspective of the tribe's people . . . Etiquette? Shame? What's that? Can you eat it? If you can't, what the hell is the point of talking about it?

## Chapter 2 – Such a Plain life

---

Shao Xuan's destination was not at the top. He walked towards the back of the mountain along a road scattered with gravel, right after, he climbed a short distance.

Reaching the other side of the mountain, he raised his eyes and looked up. Endless mountains stretching into the distance covered with forests entered into his view, among which a few hills, relatively blank and bare, with few plants. These hills were training grounds for hunting warriors in their tribe as well as the main source of stone they used. Due to the stones, the place was not suitable for plants but was indeed a fine place for training.

Shao Xuan was standing on a gravel yard. The gravel was made out of smashed stones instead of naturally formed ones. All useful stones that could be produced into stoneware had already been picked up by others in the tribe and the rest were just worthless slag, and so no one would usually visit.

It was quiet, but still, clangs could be heard from hills nearby. Shao Xuan himself had never seen a totemic warrior's training, it was said that the destructive force created by totemic warriors was so great that the vulnerable people, like Shao Xuan at this age were forbidden to come close. Many have tried to watch the training in silence but were eventually hurt by mistake.

Shao Xuan looked away and loosened the straw rope in his hand, "Now go and eat your 'noodles'."

Caesar was already tempted and instantly began to run around the gravel yard. Sniffing around as he ran, he promptly used his forelimbs to dig into the gravel upon smelling something. Before long, he pulled a large worm the length of a foot and the thickness of an adult's thumb out from the digging spot;



Caesar swallowed it immediately and went on looking for another one.

Those worms were called “stone worms” by the people of the tribe. They looked like earthworms, yet much larger in size. The one Caesar just ate was a relatively small one, for Shao Xuan had seen a stone worm as thick as a human’s arm. It is said that there were larger ones. However, the larger a stone worm grows, the deeper it buries itself underground, so there were only small ones left amongst the surface.

Stone worms tasted rather bad and many people would suffer from severe diarrhea after eating them, so no one from the tribe would keep stone worms on their menu. This was actually good news to Caesar since he had a strong appetite for stone worms.

Being a wolf, it’s rather sad that he had to stoop to eating worms.

Shao Xuan found a suitable place to air-dry the bundle of grass. He tied the grass down so that it would be more comfortable to sleep on when they got back to the cave at night.

After laying the grass down, Shao Xuan glanced around and made sure that he was the only one there. He came to a short tree at the edge of the gravel yard and began to clear the surface layer of the gravel, digging underground with the roughly built stone knife that was hanging from his waist. Soon, he uncovered an even more roughly built stone container, with a piece of meat jerky in it. Shao Xuan quickly took out the jerky and buried the container just as it was.

The meat jerky was dry and fishy, and only the size of half a hand. Shao Xuan in his last life would never have taken a second look at it, but now after starvation had settled in, rubber-tasting food became a delicacy.

You see, a plain life like that...such is our fate.

Shao Xuan felt vigorous again after eating and stood up to do a few stretches. After that, he practiced the fitness boxing he remembered from his last life. Every day, Shao Xuan would exercise, for the body he awoke in was quite weak.

Meanwhile, Caesar was still digging for worms with no lower vigilance. He would constantly look up and pay attention to the surroundings. This was the reason why Shao Xuan dared to take out food in the open, for if he was caught,

the food would be taken to satisfy the hunger of others. Shao Xuan was alone, helpless, sallow and emaciated. He would neither have the spirit nor the courage to walk out of the cave if it weren't for the experiences he had in his last life and the ruthless mind he developed in this one.

After practicing fitness boxing for a while, Shao Xuan stopped to catch his breath, only to notice Caesar suddenly turn his head with half a stone worm still in his mouth. The sudden turn of his head had torn the worm into two parts and the other half quickly burrowed back into the ground. A stone worm could still heal its wound and grow into a complete one after some period of time. The other half in Caesar's mouth was twisting its body, lashing Caesar's mouth.

Caesar did not swallow the worm or care about the worm's thrashing. Instead, he stared in one direction growling, indicating that someone was there.

Shao Xuan figured that it should be someone he knew, for Caesar did not bare his teeth. Shao Xuan also stared in the same direction, and very soon, he heard a soft sound, like wind blowing leaves on the ground. Gradually, a figure appeared in Shao Xuan's sight.

It was a very tall, big man, with fine but simple clothes of hide and fur. On his clothes was a layer of stone chips and on his face, a few scars, giving him a ferocious look. There were also scars visible on the parts of his body not shielded by his clothes. A ring of carefully selected stone tools made of fine stone was hanging on his waist.

The stones used to make these tools were different from the gravel under Shao Xuan's feet, they were harder. These could be made into much more advanced tools for hunting and were of much higher quality than the rough stone knife in Shao Xuan's hand. If traded for meat, even the smallest tool on that ring would fetch more meat than that which could feed Shao Xuan for days.

Perhaps it was a habit of his from hunting in the woods, the approaching person walked in the same silent way, even when having no intention to hide. Caesar would not have been able to spot him at once and Shao Xuan would never have heard the slightest sound if he truly wanted to conceal himself.

Before Caesar ceased his growling, he immediately tightened his body

revealing four long fangs as the approaching man gazed at him for a moment. Not even the remainder of the stone worm's split body falling to the ground from his mouth distracted his attention.

To hunting warriors in the tribe, beasts were just prey, food. Naturally, Caesar fell into this category. Although the approaching person only gave him a glance without threat, he exuded a very dangerous aura that frightened Caesar at once because of his hunter's instinct.

Given the situation, Shao Xuan knew he had to speak first.

"Good morning, Uncle Mai!"

The middle-aged strong man withdrew his gaze from Caesar and looked towards Shao Xuan. The dangerous atmosphere from earlier faded, Shao Xuan's tension eased. In fact, most warriors in the tribe would not harm children unless provoked.

Mai looked at Shao Xuan and then looked down at the marks on the floor that Shao Xuan made with his earlier exercises. Glee filled his eyes, but his smile did not soften his face because of the scars.

Shao Xuan knew that Mai was kind and friendly, not as scary as he seemed. Also, Mai and his current body's father were in the same hunting team, so for old time's sake, Mai would always help Shao Xuan.

"You came out so early Ah-Xuan? It's good that you want to practice before it's time," said Mai.

People in the tribe did not have family names and most people were named with only one word. Perhaps it was more convenient for others to memorize and Shao Xuan's body in this life was called "Xuan". "When in Rome, do as Romans do". Shao Xuan got used to this gradually. As for the "Ah", it had an interesting origin, there once was a highly respected ancestor who tended to shout out the word "Ah" before he called someone's name. This developed into a tradition, passed on through generations, and so people in the tribe today would all call out the word "Ah" before one's name. Of course, the rule could not be applied to seniors and those who had special positions.

Only very few people who lived near the mountain, including children from the “orphan cave”, would come out to exercise during their youth. Basically, their lives revolved around eating and sleeping, their luxurious entertainment would be playing for a short while. This was because exercising and playing both require the exertion of the body, and too much movement would cause hunger to develop quicker. For the poor, the less the consumption the better, so even adults were in favor of this. However, Mai obviously approved Shao Xuan’s action, for it would be more beneficial in the future if he started to practice now.

“Are you returning from the training ground, Uncle Mai?” asked Shao Xuan.

“Yes.” Mai nodded.

No fixed timelines were settled for warriors to train, they could arrange their training as they pleased as long as they did not miss the hunt.

“It seems that Uncle Mai had good fortune today! By the way, Uncle Mai, I heard from Lang Ga that tomorrow it will be your team’s turn to hunt? Good luck with that and I wish that you will return fully loaded!”

Lang Ga was in the same hunting team with Mai, and he was the one who brought Caesar to Shao Xuan. The name “Lang Ga” meant “ground bow” in the local language, Lang Ga was a person deserving of this name.

Mai smiled at Shao Xuan’s words. He did not say much and prepared to leave, for tomorrow he would go hunting and it might be days before he returned. He needed to rest so that he would be energetic in the morning.

Mai stopped after a few steps and turned around, “Ah-Xuan!”

Shao Xuan looked at Mai and saw him retrieve a piece of meat jerky from his animal-hide bag.

Warriors would bring their own food when they train because there were only stones and rocks on the training ground, so few plants and even fewer animals present there could be considered as food. In order to replenish their fatigued bodies, they would prepare some food ahead of time. The meat jerky Mai held in his hand was prepared early and he had planned to eat this small leftover piece on his way back. Upon unexpectedly meeting Shao Xuan, he gave

it to him without a moment's hesitation. Shao Xuan was not permitted to go out hunting as it was forbidden for children in the tribe to do so, for their own protection.

"Thank you, Uncle Mai!" Shao Xuan said.

Food was scarce in the tribe, especially in this season and not everyone would be so generous as to hand out meat like Mai did. Mai said after he gave Shao Xuan the meat, "At the hillside where I train myself, sunset can be observed..."

Mai left after he shared the location of his training ground in detail, and exhorted Shao Xuan to be extra careful. Caesar relaxed after Mai's figure disappeared into the distance. Looking down, he was very angry to find that the half of the stone worm he had dropped already slipped away. Caesar dug down deep and tried carefully tracking its scent as if trying to recapture its prey. However, Shao Xuan was apathetic to this, as he had a chance to quench his appetite for witnessing Mai's training grounds.

Shao Xuan buried the stone container with the meat jerky inside that he got from Mai and laid a layer of stone chips on the top to disguise it. He called for Caesar looking in the direction that Mai pointed out.

"Come, Caesar! Let us do something bold!"

## Chapter 3 – Old Rivals

---

Since this area was the main source of stone for the tribe, surely there would be plenty of fine stones which could be easily made into tools. Naturally, totemic warriors were privileged with the first choice of stones to be gathered, since it was their training ground. Afterward, the weaker people, including Shao Xuan, would have a chance to “pick up the leftovers”.

The phrase sounded quite demeaning, though it described the situation perfectly.

Normally, others in the tribe would “pick up the leftovers” upon the hours of dinner, when it was almost sunset. This was because only at that time would the majority of the warriors stop training and rest. However, in other times of a day, the training ground would become a rather dangerous place for those who had not awakened their totemic power. The stray stones scattered by the smashing of the totemic warriors’ fists against rocks were basically bullets for the vulnerable. Thankfully with Mai’s earlier instructions, it would be much easier and safer for Shao Xuan to reach the destination.

A fine stone could trade for a lot and Shao Xuan certainly did not intend to let the opportunity slip away.

Together with Caesar, Shao Xuan traveled the road which Mai pointed out earlier. While doing so, rumbling sounds came from the training hills, stones being shattered somewhere. From above, in the direction of alternate paths, much larger stones were rolling down the side of the mountain. It would be very risky if Shao Xuan were to have walked there in the instance that Mai had not informed him of the safe route.

Shao Xuan continued walking as he casually fixed his messy hair and shook off the stone chips caught onto his clothes.

The place Mai trained himself was close to the top of the hill. Since this was the totemic warriors' training ground, no gentle path had been excavated and it proved to be difficult to traverse. Shao Xuan's arms, hands, and feet were bleeding when he finally reached the correct area.

The wounds did not concern Shao Xuan, for they would heal after a few days' rest. It would all be worth it if he managed to find some fine stones.

It took a lot of strength to reach this place and Shao Xuan definitely would not have been able to climb the mountain if he hadn't eaten breakfast this morning.

Stones of different sizes and various shapes were lying on the uneven ground, while on the opposite side of the cliff there were holes of different depths with traces of indentation at the edges of the rock face. Shao Xuan assumed that there must have been harder stones embedded in the holes he found before Mai dug them out and brought them back with him to make hunting tools out of. Hard and fine stones were not widely distributed in the mountains. In fact, they would be formed into clumps, with some of them on the surface of the mountain and some buried deep inside. Warriors could not tear up the mountain, so finding these fine stones would ultimately depend on their luck. This is why Shao Xuan earlier made the remark that Mai had good fortune when he returned.

Aside from the holes, there were fist and foot marks on the cliff. This was where Mai trained himself.

Totemic warriors developed particularly hard fists. Shao Xuan would break his fist if he struck even the most vulnerable part of the cliff, while the stone would remain intact.

The hardest stones with suitable shape were already picked out by Mai. Mai aimed for those which consisted of advanced materials, but there were still some stones of an average quality left which Shao Xuan could use.

Without a second thought, Shao Xuan made Caesar responsible for surveillance, while he took his time to find stones which could be traded for food. He had to hurry before someone else arrived to rob him of his findings.

Shao Xuan picked up a long shard of stone. It was half a foot in length with an irregular shape and not particularly large or heavy. Shao Xuan knew that the

quality of a stone did not depend on its weight. There were many types of stone present here that Shao Xuan hadn't seen in his former life. Even employing common sense from his past life would prove to be useless in this world. All the knowledge Shao Xuan mastered was still new to him, he accumulated this from his experiences over the past six months. Unlike the experienced warriors, who could evaluate and grade a stone by its texture and appearance, Shao Xuan knew nothing of how to identify a stone's quality for he had no rich experience in this field. So he utilized a primitive method in which he would find a stone of suitable shape to work on and use his stone knife to hack at it to see if it would leave a mark on the stone. Normally, the shallower the engraving, the better the quality of the stone.

Shao Xuan raised his knife high and struck the edge of the stone. After a loud crack, a slight mark was made on the stone. Shao Xuan was very delighted, for he identified that it could be made into arrow or spearhead. Stoneware armor smiths could decide what to make the stone into, all Shao Xuan needed to do was to find a good one and trade the stone in for food.

After placing the stone into his animal-skin bag, riddled with several holes, Shao Xuan planned to keep looking, however Caesar detected something abnormal.

Shao Xuan carefully moved towards Caesar and looked in the direction that he was indicating. There were three kids, about ten years old, stronger and taller than Shao Xuan.

Shao Xuan's old acquaintances as well as old rivals, and they would always rob Shao Xuan of his belongings. Those three little bastards!

They were not from the "orphan cave", but from families living in the mountain foot district. They would usually hang out together and began robbing Shao Xuan only a few days after Shao Xuan woke up in this world. At first, Shao Xuan did not change his mindset and often did things as he did in his last life. He would hold back to some extent even when he fought back. This mercy and kindness resulted in the loss of all his meat jerky that he worked so hard to find, and the scum beat the crap out of him.

Afterward, Shao Xuan understood the reality of the situation and adapted. It



was just like the first day when he woke up in the cave and looked out to find children fighting each other for food, with the eyes of wolves. Shao Xuan then changed his attitude towards them.

While recuperating, Shao Xuan had a profound reflection and after that decided he would no longer hold back when fighting with them. The rule within their tribe was no killing and no disabling. So no one would interfere if no one was killed or disabled. The residents of the mountain foot district were already used to this barbaric rule.

Shao Xuan did not know if the tribal people belonged to some kind of special race, they had strong healing abilities even though they looked similar to the people from his former life. A man could stand on his own feet again after a few day's rest even after he was badly injured. After one or two months, his body would be as good as new. That was also the reason why people in their tribe did not care for fighting, for in their eyes, a fight for reasons such as this was merely a small issue that was far less important than finding food.

As for the three kids, Shao Xuan was neither as tall nor as strong as them and he was not as well-nourished as them. What could he use to compete? It requires a ruthless mind and a strong strategy to fight, especially when outnumbered.

Shao Xuan pressed down Caesar's head a little, but Caesar was still showing his teeth fiercely towards the oncoming kids. Shao Xuan had to squeeze Caesar's mouth and whisper, "Wait a second!"

Looking around, Shao Xuan chose a hidden place for the animal skin bag containing the stone he picked up. Then he quietly moved to the back side of the cliff and said to Caesar, "You must deal with 'Ye', okay? You know who 'Ye' is, yes?"

Some warrior had once said that most beasts living in the deep forests were quite smart, and the stupid ones would be even harder to train. Caesar belonged to the smart kind, and this would not be their first time working together. Even if Caesar got confused, it wouldn't matter who he dealt with, for

Shao Xuan had decided to handle the leading bastard called “Sai” himself, for it would be a lot easier once he knocked Sai down.

Caesar kept his body close to the ground and hid behind a giant boulder, this showed he understood Shao Xuan’s command.

It seemed that all wild beasts by nature are capable of stalking with stealth, pouncing fiercely and executing a fatal strike. Their instincts are aroused by hunting, even if one was a wolf brought up as a dog.

## Chapter 4 – Children from the cave are so horrifying

---

Of course, Shao Xuan did not expect Caesar to make a fatal strike, for it was forbidden in the tribe. However, Shao Xuan would never surrender his things to anyone, especially to those three little bastards.

Just as Shao Xuan was immersed in his thoughts about whether he should smash his enemies with stones or hit them with his bare hands, the three kids were marching up in the mountain, unaware of Shao Xuan's ambush. Their attention was on other aspects, for example, avoid getting hit by falling stones. They did not know which path was safe for going up, so they could only try and make detours based on the direction from where the trembling sounds were coming from.

"Is it really this way, Zhan?" Sai walked in the front of their group, and he had just evaded a stone falling from the oblique top. He glowered at the one hidden behind him, with his eyebrows lifted high.

The timid kid named Zhan shrank his neck and answered, "It sure is! My dad was in charge of the patrol today and he saw that Mai was coming down this way. We are getting close. There should be a lot of good stuff left since Mai is a mid-rank warrior."

Sai hummed and kept going as he kicked the stone falling beside his feet.

Seeing them approaching, Shao Xuan held his breath and waited for the perfect timing.

Since they have worked together multiple times, Shao Xuan did not need to say a word but gave Caesar a gesture when the time was right. Then he made a big step towards Sai, with his right fist smashing towards Sai's forehead.

Sai had a quick reaction, but he did not have the chance to fully avoid Shao Xuan's sudden attack, even though he was the tallest one among the three. He barely dodged to one side to save his nose, but his face was still hit strongly. Before he could react again, another strike hit his jaw, which made him dizzy and he fell down.

However, that was only the beginning. After a very short period of time, Shao Xuan's fists came one after another, falling on Sai's face. Eventually, Shao Xuan chose not to use stones to smash his enemy. Even attacking with one's bare hands could cause enough pain and suffering.

People in the Flaming Horn tribe were pretty strong, and even children who had not awoken their totem power could beat most people Shao Xuan met in his last life. He wanted to end things quickly, so he did not hold back his strength.

At the same time when Shao Xuan rushed towards Sai, Caesar jumped at Ye. Just like Shao Xuan had trained him, Caesar bit into Ye's animal skin clothes and the straw rope on his waist, instead of biting Ye's flesh directly. Caesar kept his mouth closed and dragged Ye in the other direction. Even though Caesar was still in his infancy, he could drag a ten-year-old kid around easily, which left no chance for Ye to cause any trouble for Shao Xuan, or to stand up on his feet.

As for the third kid named Zhan, Shao Xuan intended to leave him alone for a while, for he was the timid one and could not be compared to the other two regarding body strength and ruthlessness.

Zhan and Ye were both shocked when Shao Xuan had rushed forward and attacked Sai when suddenly Caesar jumped over to hold Ye before he was able to help Sai. Looking at those fangs, both Zhan and Ye were so scared that they almost wet their pants, especially Ye, who had violently been dragged around by Caesar. He could do nothing but call out for help.

Zhan realized what was happening after a while, and then swung a wooden stick towards Shao Xuan.

Shao Xuan was also paying attention to Zhan's reaction as he kept punching on Sai's face. The wooden stick missed his head, but Shao Xuan's back was burning in pain since he did not fully avoid the attack. He began punching Sai

even faster.

Sai was in fact, two years older than Shao Xuan, and much stronger. But he lost his combat ability under Shao Xuan's storm-like punches, he was merely a kid with no totem power after all.

Shao Xuan breathed heavily knowing he would lose if he could not win fast. During the last six months, he had suffered enough from hesitating.

After he had resolved the biggest problem, Shao Xuan rolled on the ground to get away from the wooden stick. He looked at Zhan with a fierce look in his eyes left from his earlier combat, which made the stick in the timid Zhan's hand tremble.

Zhan shuddered with fear, seeing that Sai was already down, with no capacity to fight back, and Ye on the other side was also in a pretty difficult situation, all scared and shouting. He held the stick tighter but looked away from Shao Xuan's gaze.

Shao Xuan knew that Zhan had cold feet seeing his reaction, so he stood up and walked towards Zhan step by step.

The speed of Shao Xuan's approach was not fast, but every step he took was like a thump in Zhan's heart. And Zhan's face grew darker with every thump.

Between the two, Zhan was the one with taller figure and the weapon, but obviously, he was the weaker one in terms of momentum. When Shao Xuan was only a step away from Zhan, Zhan trembled and tossed his stick to the ground, stepping back to show that he surrendered.

They had encountered each other quite a few times, and thus Zhan knew at heart that Shao Xuan would not continue fighting him once he showed the gesture, even if he had hit Shao Xuan several times on his back earlier.

Sai had just recovered a little, and he was furious and extremely upset seeing Zhan's surrender. Such a dumbass!

Sai knew it was bad when he found that the assailant was Shao Xuan. Because for the past several times they had met each other, they weren't able to gain an advantage over Shao Xuan. However, this time, he had been knocked to the ground before he could fight back! It was so frustrating!

They were taking a risk here and trying their luck to see what they could find, but unexpectedly, Shao Xuan was already here and far ahead of them! Did Shao Xuan possess the nose of a wolf? Compared to Shao Xuan, the three of them had come late, and what was even more humiliating was that they lost the fight as well! Thinking of that, Sai looked at Shao Xuan as if there was deep hatred between them.

Shao Xuan ignored Sai, but he did not plan to let go of Zhan so easily. He did not beat Zhan as he had beaten Sai but merely kicked him down to the direction of Sai.

Picking up the wooden stick from the ground left by Zhan, Shao Xuan walked towards Sai and Zhan as they were lying on the ground. He weighed the stick and slowly rubbed his hands on it. The blood he on his fists from the previous combat scraped onto the stick, as he smiled at the two.

Seeing that smile, Sai and Zhan felt goosebumps, they wanted to run away immediately, for they were sensing that something bad would happen to them. However, Sai was lying on the ground and could not stand back up on his feet, while Zhan quickly withdrew his feet to move backward.

Shao Xuan lowered his body and then abruptly he swung the stick towards them. It was sudden and it came straight to the point without the slightest hesitation.

At that moment, Sai and Zhan had cold sweat running all over and felt that they had lost their breath. Everything vanished in their eyes with only the stick left in the middle.

Click!

The stick hit the space between Sai and Zhan, and it broke into pieces as soon as it touched the ground. Bits of wood flew towards Sai and Zhan's faces cutting them slightly.

Shao Xuan got closer to the two with a frozen expression, "The things over there belong to me. You shall go there after I have collected them. Understood?"

His voice was not loud but had a strange feeling of pressure. Perhaps Sai and Zhan felt that the earlier stick would have fallen on their bodies had they not surrendered.

Sai remained in silence while glaring at Shao Xuan. However, Zhan was shaking like leaves in the wind, and he nodded hurriedly to show that he fully understood. In his eyes, there was still carefulness and fear.

Zhan thought at heart, "No wonder that parents forbade their children to go near those who are from the orphan cave. Children from the cave are so horrifying! They are even more horrifying than Sai, who often fought in the past!"

Shao Xuan did not plan to waste any more time on them. If Sai could come here with his friends, then others might come as well. Shao Xuan knew that he was able to deal with those three kids only through tactics and that victory was achieved with the help of Caesar. Shao Xuan would have to flee if more people or older children came.

Thinking this, Shao Xuan hurried up in collecting stones.

## Chapter 5 – Are you f\*\*king kidding me?

---

Sai laid down nearby and rubbed his face, not caring about his swollen face or the bleeding nostrils. He glared at Shao Xuan picking things out, but looking from that angle, he could not see clearly what Shao Xuan had eventually collected. He was certain that he must have picked out some fine stones that could be traded for at least a few days' food.

Shao Xuan could perceive the gaze from Sai and Zhan, however, he was already accustomed to that. After picking up several items, he noticed that it was already quite late and was time for him to go back. There were still plenty of nice stones left from his perspective, but he knew that he had gained enough for a day. Collecting too much might not be a good thing for him, especially when he was still young and vulnerable. He might lose them all if he had too much.

His current strength wasn't enough. He needed to have the patience to wait for that so-called totem power to be awakened...

After calling Caesar back to make sure Ye was safe after being dragged away by Caesar, Shao Xuan left with his stones packed in animal skin.

By the time Ye staggered back, he saw Sai lying on the ground with blood on his face and gritted teeth. Zhan was next to him, still trembling with fear.

Sai recovered a little and got his breath back. Immediately he commanded Ye and Zhan to see if they could find any fine stones that could be traded. He murmured something quite offensive and swore to get his revenge by beating up Shao Xuan and rob away all his possessions the next time they encountered each other.

What they didn't know, was that not far away, some warriors witnessed the



whole incident. But they had also left one after another after Shao Xuan had gone.

“Who was that lad?” a young warrior asked his companion curiously.

“You mean the one with that wolf? I believe he is called Xuan and lives in the cave near the mountain foot district. As for the wolf, you’d better keep your hands off of it, for that belongs to a Shaman!” The older warrior warned. He did not know if there was some hidden meaning in the Shaman’s act, nor did he care. He just needed to know that the wolf belonged to a Shaman and could not be hunted down. And in his perspective, that kid was merely keeping the wolf for the Shaman.

The younger warrior grasped his messy hair covered in stone chips, “I won’t be thinking about a Shaman’s things. Ha-ha, I was just thinking about that kid there. Based on how he acted just now, I think he would be a good warrior after he awakens his totem power. Perhaps we could recruit him into our hunting team.”

“It’s still too early, and that can wait for at least two to three years. I believe those several kids from your mountainside district are not bad, but for children from the cave...” The older warrior shook his head and did not finish his words, yet anyone could sense the meaning hidden behind his sentence.

The tribe was roughly divided into three main districts, and the stronger a warrior, the higher the district he would be living in. The mountaintop district was the central spot of their tribe. It had been said that the tribe’s fire pit was located there, and it was also the coldest area.

In the eyes of many warriors, children from the cave possessed poorer qualifications than children living around the mountain foot district, and they could not awaken their totem power as early as others. Even if they have grown old enough to awaken totem power, they would not be easily accepted by most hunting teams. Teamwork is considered to be the most essential part when it comes to hunting, and any weak link could bring unexpected tragic consequences.

Shao Xuan did not know about the warriors’ talk, nor their opinions about him. But he already knew that someone must have been around, observing.

Because he had heard things and had the ability to speculate.

Although warriors would not care about the surroundings while they trained, they were quite sensitive when they were resting. The noise here must have drawn the attention of a few warriors, and they were probably standing nearby when Ye shouted out for help. It's just that warriors would not intervene easily.

And Shao Xuan was certain, that they would keep on observing from the side as long as the situation was under control. Just as earlier when Shao Xuan pounded the wood stick down to the ground, if Shao Xuan had aimed at Sai or Zhan, perhaps warriors would have stepped in to intervene because Zhan and Sai's lives were at risk based on that strength. Which meant that Shao Xuan would have given them a much worse impression of being impulsive, and that would do Shao Xuan no good if he intended to continue living in the tribe. So that strike was just a threat and warning to Sai and Zhan.

Shao Xuan returned fully loaded. The patrolling warriors and guards who were guarding at the edge of the residential areas were only asking a thing or two, seeing Shao Xuan's bulging animal skin bag. They would not try to rob his harvest, for they did not necessarily see Shao Xuan's things as valuable enough.

Back on the gravel yard where he exercised that morning, Shao Xuan picked out two pieces of stone for sale and buried the rest. He did not have the time to handle those stones, and he would be an idiot to bring them back to the cave. Inside the cave, there were a bunch of "starving wolf cubs", who would try to fight for every bit of meat or thing. Therefore Shao Xuan never hid food or anything that could be used for trading in the cave.

He sat on the ground to rest after he hid away his items. Both the climbing and fighting were really tiring.

Shao Xuan looked at the distant mountains and then looked back at the residential areas of the tribe. He stared at the houses near the mountain foot district and then looked down at his fists with dry blood. It was only half a year, and he had become a savage person like a caveman. The pressure to stay alive surely added to accelerate the assimilation into a savage.

What had it been like in civilized times? Shao Xuan had a few dreams at night, but the scenes got more and more blurry as time went by. But it had only been

less than a year.

Even though life here was a little bit better compared to the primitive barbarians who used to eat human beings, as Shi Lin once described, it was not that much better.

Once upon a time, Shao Xuan would try to mediate when he saw parents disciplining their kids, and sometimes he would even get into a fight when he saw parents beating up their children. He would have never hurt children, but what about now?

Sure, the environment was different, and the children in the tribe were not the same as the children from his past life. Even if they were at the same age, their characters had much in difference. Take kids from the orphan cave, for instance, even if you beat them down this time, next time they would still come up and fight when there's food, with even fiercer attitude and harder fists. When they are controlled by their emotions, no one would ever hold back like Shao Xuan. Wood or stone, they would use whatever by their hand as a weapon when they fight. One shall only lose if he has even the slightest mercy in his heart. For example, Zhan was trembling and he was afraid earlier, but next time, he would still swing his weapon at Shao Xuan and try to rob his things together with Sai.

For God's sake, the first day when Shao Xuan woke up from a coma, it was the time when people were distributing food in the cave. Shao Xuan thought that perhaps he had fallen into a wolf's cave when other kids were staring at each other with hatred. They were all kids from six to thirteen in age, and only a few of them were thirteen years old.

Savageness is contagious.

After he had enough rest, Shao Xuan used two fine stones to trade with a stoneware crafter and got four meat jerkies back; two with bones and the other two without bones. He gave Caesar the jerkies with bone and ate one without bone himself. The last meat jerky, he used to trade for a cheap animal skin in medium size. Winter was coming and he had to prepare early.

He returned to the orphan cave, just when food was about to be distributed.

The man in charge had already prepared the food and stored it within a giant stone crock. Only those with totem power could have the strength to lift a stone crock that large.

The tribe would take food to the orphan cave until children there awakened their totem power and left to build their own house.

Sometimes there was meat on their menu, but there was not enough, and could only maintain the basic living needs of children, for meat was hard to obtain. Besides meat, usually their food would be plants, for example the red-haired fruit that Shao Xuan was looking at.

That was a tuber from some trees in the color of red-brown, with plenty of thin root tubers on the outside, like fine hair. The big ones had the size of pumpkins in Shao Xuan's past life, and the small ones were in the size of adult's fist. It tasted like potatoes, and one would easily feel full. The only problem is that the red-haired fruit had some side effect.

Speaking of the effects, red-haired fruits are good for regulating gastrointestinal functions. In plain words, it would create lots of gas. And, the effect would be more obvious, if one's only food was the red-haired fruit without meat. No meat left only the direct side effect of farting. But that would not be so if one also ate some meat.

Most children in the orphan cave only slept and ate every day, resulting in only a few children trying to go out for extra food. And with the main source of food coming from the tribe, it led to the fact that every time they ate red-haired fruit, the air quality in the orphan cave would be extremely unique and quite 'special'.

Shao Xuan's face turned green.\*

"Hey, Ah-Xuan!"

Ku was in charge of distributing food and he ran towards Shao Xuan as he saw him, with a piece of boiled red-haired fruit in his hand. That was a big piece, at least obviously larger than what the other kids were having.

Ku was one of the oldest kids in their cave. He was thirteen years old. There were two other thirteen-years-olds but they were not as strong as Ku, so Ku

was in charge of managing the cave and he helped in distributing food every day. There were obvious advantages in taking that job, one of which was that he could have more food to eat himself. This let Ku grow much stronger than the other orphans; even looking like someone with parents.

Normally Ku would not talk much with others, as he usually spent all day out and only came back to the cave when food should be served. He had not spoken much with Shao Xuan either, but why then was he approaching him with a big piece of fruit in his hand?

Shao Xuan looked at Ku and took over the red-haired fruit.

Ku was in a good mood, and he was somehow excited.

“Ah-Xuan, I will go to the hillside tomorrow and spend the whole winter there. You shall take over the cave.” Ku said.

Shao Xuan almost threw his red-haired fruit at Ku’s words. Even if Ku leaves, the cave should be taken over by other older kids. There were two thirteen-year-old children and quite a few eleven and twelve-years-olds. Why would the job fall onto him, while he was under ten?

The appointment could not have been made by Ku, so Shao Xuan asked, “Who said that?”

Ku pointed to that person who was in charge of bringing food every day, as that one leaned against the stone crock, casually picking his teeth while shaking his toes.

Looking at the children fighting for food fiercely in the orphan cave, Shao Xuan wanted badly to grab the collar of the man in charge and shout out, “Are you f\*\*king kidding me, delivery guy?!”

Note:

\* Unwell

And

**WINTER IS COMING!**

# Chapter 6 – Troublesome

---

Translated by Sunyancai

There were 27 children living in that cave in total, including Shao Xuan. Since every one of them was ferocious enough, how could Shao Xuan take over the cave with his skinny arms and legs?

Many children in the cave would love to inherit Ku's position in order to get more food. Obviously, it raised a lot of discontentment when Shao Xuan got the job at such a young age. And it's known to all that discontentment breeds strife inevitably.

The word "troublesome" could briefly describe the situation.

The middle-aged man called "Ge" was in charge of delivering food to the orphan cave every day. He was not as strong as Mai and even worse, he lost an arm in the process of a hunting trip, which ended his identity as a hunting warrior. That was why he retired from hunting team and began his job in delivering food.

Shao Xuan went to ask for the reason, but he didn't get an answer.

With the food distributed, Ge carried the stone crock with one hand and left. Even though he lost one of his arms, his bodily strength remained intact and he had no problem with carrying a stone crock with only one hand.

After Ge left, Ku went inside the cave to announce the decision of who was going to replace him and take over his position.

"Starting tomorrow, Ah-Xuan will be in charge of distributing food!"

The atmosphere had just calmed down from the earlier fights over food, but

immediately the air became tense again because of Ku's announcement. Kids in the orphan cave did not yell to complain for they were not experts in arguing. They merely looked unfriendly and dissatisfied.

Ku did not stay longer or give any further explanations, and soon left with all his belongings. He was almost an adult and if no accidents happen, his totem power would be awoken after this winter. Which meant that he might be leaving the cave for good.

Ku left easily, but Shao Xuan's mind was weighed down with anxiety.

Looking up at the sky, Shao Xuan noticed that it looked to be around three o'clock in the afternoon if a day was still broken into 24 hours as it was in his last life. This left him some time until sunset to go out.

Together with Caesar on a rope, Shao Xuan went to the gravel yard again, sitting on the ground thinking about what his next move was going to be.

Originally, he had thought that he would keep on living a plain life. After a few years, he would awaken his totem power and start his own life on the outside. Barring accidents, he could build a house, join a hunting team, and live out his years. Even if he were a late developer, his totem power would still awaken at Ku's age. However, based on the current circumstances, living a plain life was no longer an option. For example, when he had just left the cave with Caesar, he noticed quite a few kids stared at them maliciously.

"Do you think they will wake up at midnight and make you their snack?" Shao Xuan looked at Caesar who was wandering in the gravel yard.

In the past, while Ku was around, those whelps dared not do anything for real, but the situation would not be so predictable now with Ku gone. Children in the cave were much more ruthless than outsiders and a lot dumber. With severe hunger, they would definitely ignore the patterned plate from the Shaman. What if they do unite together, and roast Caesar? Shao Xuan would never have a chance of winning faced with dozens of kids there.

Caesar was not aware of the coming difficulty as he kept searching for stone worms in the gravel yard. Since there weren't many left, he began moving towards the black swamp.

In the vicinity of the tribe, there were two restricted areas. One was a large black swamp, where people would easily get stuck in, and being stuck basically meant death. The other one was the river in front of the hill, and its other bank could not even be seen. In that river lived numerous water monsters. In the early rumors, a few powerful warriors in the tribe went into the river to catch fish but never came back again. With too much unknown danger, the leader of the tribe forbade people to enter the river.

So, aside from some women in the tribe occasionally going near the shoal to wash animal skins, no one would touch the water. There was another stream coming down from the top of the mountain where the tribe's drinking water came from. Naturally no one would willingly come into contact with a river of unknown dangers.

There were guards taking turns to guard at the black swamp and along the riverside, in case that someone should step into danger unconsciously, or some unpredictable danger happened.

Fishing and hunting were often combined, and since there wasn't much luck in fishing, the tribe mainly relied on hunting, added by the lack of domestication and farming. That was also the main cause of the food crisis within the tribe.

Food is the cause of everything. Children in that cave were already slobbering after Caesar as he walked around with all the meat under his skin.

"What should I do?" Shao Xuan sighed again, and he began to blame the old Shaman who had given him a patterned plate, then never showed up again.

People, especially kids with no totem power were forbidden to go into the black swamp, or enter the waters, but no one said anything about wolves. So once in awhile when they were nearby, Caesar would go to the black swamp to find something to grind his teeth, for example, some odd beetles living there. Time after time, the guarding warriors would turn a blind eye to Caesar's coming.

Animals have sensitive instincts for danger, so naturally Caesar would only wander around the edges, for he knew the black swamp was filled with risks.

This time, Caesar came back with something in his mouth. When he got near, he spat out a black lump in front of Shao Xuan.



It was some worm that Shao Xuan had never seen. Unlike the beetle last time, this worm was much softer and was as big as Shao Xuan's palm with a flat oval shape. It had many thin and long feet, and it was as black as the swamp.

When it was in Caesar's mouth, it used its feet to poke at Caesar's nose.

Caesar had taken back a few worms in the past, perhaps he was doing it for entertainment. After all, there were not many creatures that could be found nearby the tribe. And chasing rabbits only existed in his dreams. It's pretty sad that Caesar, a wolf, had to deal with worms all the time.

Just as Caesar was trying to recapture the fleeing worm, Shao Xuan discovered that the worm spread out large quantities of black bubbles from its mouth and the bubbles covered the worm as a whole. Caesar did not like those bubbles, so he had to let go of the worm.

The black bubbles gathered and finally it was as large as a football with the worm in its center. Caesar circled around the ball made from bubbles yet did not bite. The bubbles must have really tasted bad, because obviously, Caesar hated them.

About fifteen minutes later, Caesar gave up on the worm inside the black ball, and turned back to look for some stone worms in the gravel yard.

However, Shao Xuan was quite interested in that worm, so he pulled out his stone knife and poked onto the ball. Surprisingly, soft black bubbles became hard and crisp as time went by. And the black "football" broke into halves at Shao Xuan's poking. The worm hidden inside ran out in panic and fled toward the black swamp. It had shrunk by more than half and now looked shriveled.

Shao Xuan squatted down instead of chasing the worm and took a careful look at the "ball", which had already been broken into two pieces.

By picking up the half spheres with the stone knife, Shao Xuan found out that the two parts were pretty light in weight, and it required some strength to crush.

After working on one half-sphere and eventually crushing it, Shao Xuan set his sight on the other half. He called back Caesar after some time thinking, and

walked towards the river with the intact black half-sphere.

Even if the tribesman came to the river, they too would only carefully move about the shoal, as the shoal was still considered safe.

Of course Shao Xuan was not looking for trouble, so he remained at the shore. God knows what kind of weird creatures were in the waters. He was just going to try an experiment with the half-sphere, to prove his guess.

Shao Xuan untied the straw rope he had on his waist, and tied one to the end of the black half-sphere, with the other end being held in his own hand. He then tossed the black half-sphere into the waters.

As expected, the black sphere-half floated on the surface of the water.

That thing... could be used for fishing.

# Chapter 7 – Peculiar Fish

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan used the black half-sphere as a float and tied a stone worm to the end of a straw rope since there were no fishhooks and he could not find a stone hook as a replacement. If only there was a predatory fish inside the water that showed interest in stone worms!

In his last life, Shao Xuan used to fish with earthworms, and, not having met any earthworms in this life, he tried using stone worms instead. People in the tribe often said that creatures in that river were pretty ferocious and tough, so perhaps they wouldn't mind the rough bait. Not to mention that Shao Xuan did not intend to catch a fish without a hook. He was only testing, and if there's something in the water that would eat stone worms, he could make a proper stone hook tomorrow.

The stone worm was found by Caesar and temporarily tied to the end of a straw rope. It might escape after resisting some time in the water, but Shao Xuan could only try since he did not have enough tools. If it failed, then he would ask Caesar to find another stone worm.

The black half-sphere, which served as a hook, was tied on the straw rope and was about half a meter away from the stone worm. Shao Xuan did not plan to do his test in deep waters so, standing at the shoal, Shao Xuan tossed out the bait and the black half-sphere. Bearing the weight of the straw rope and the stone worm, the black half-sphere sank down a little, but still floated above the water. This let Shao Xuan know what might be happening under the surface based on his observation of the half-sphere.

The straw rope he had with him was less than five meters long, so Shao Xuan

was very close to the place where he threw the stone worm. Standing by the water, Shao Xuan paid extra attention not to step into the water, so he would be able to quickly run away if any danger arose, or in case that something unexpected happened. There were warriors guarding the water, so he mapped out his escape route towards them.

As Shao Xuan did all the preparation, the two warriors guarding the riverside were rather curious about Shao Xuan's mysterious objects. At first, they assumed that the kid must have wanted to jump in the river, so they were prepared to pull him out and toss him back to his cave. But Shao Xuan's strange behavior shocked both of them, so they kept staring at Shao Xuan without approaching him after they exchanged knowing glances with each other.

"Caesar, you pull the rope when I give you the signal, okay?"  
Shao Xuan put the other end of the rope in Caesar's mouth and held the middle part himself.

Some time passed but all was quiet. Shao Xuan began thinking that maybe there were no fish near the bank, or that maybe none of the fish were interested in the stone worms?

However, before he could finish his thoughts, the black half-sphere sank suddenly.

Something's biting!

The rope in Shao Xuan's hand slipped quickly and he felt burning pain because of the friction. At that moment he grasped the rope tightly and shouted at Caesar for help, "Pull, Caesar!"

Though it all happened in a second, Shao Xuan still felt that the strength under water was far more than he could bear, and that was the reason why he asked Caesar for help. He was eager to see what exactly was biting below the surface.

Caesar bit hard on the straw rope and pulled backward. He had quite some experience in pulling, having pulled both people and rope.

The two warriors observing from afar tensed up, for they had never been in the water, and the most dangerous thing they had done involving the river, was

them standing on the very edge and using its water to clean their animal skins. In the summertime, they had witnessed a giant water monster appear from the center of the river, and they had also heard a lot of horror stories about the river, passed down from former generations. So they, like everyone, had been keeping a cautious and dreadful attitude towards that river. Seeing that Shao Xuan was pulling something out from the river, they got extremely tense and feared that some giant creature might appear.

“Shall we go down there?” A warrior nudged his companion with his elbow.

“Eh...Let’s...Let’s go and have a look...” The other warrior hesitated for a while, but still gave a positive answer as if he had thought about something.

Wind was blowing above the water to the land, with moisture and a fishy smell in the air. It may be the smell of water or the creature beneath it, but it made the two warriors even more nervous.

Shao Xuan felt something pulling him in the water as it tried very hard to drag him into the river, while he and Caesar tried to drag it out. However, Shao Xuan was slightly better in strength and, step by step, had almost dragged the thing out of the water.

The thing biting the bait showed its figure, and the surface splashed due to its fierce struggle.

Shao Xuan held the rope tightly staring at the surface attentively when suddenly there was an image in the distance that flashed by his eyes. In it was something that had a big mouth with numerous tiny sharp teeth and bit towards Shao Xuan! Its mouth was so big that it could swallow Shao Xuan’s head but just as the image got near, it disappeared.

The flash was too quick and vanished before Shao Xuan could even react. He shook his head, thinking that perhaps it was an illusion caused by him being too nervous.

When the two warriors arrived at Shao Xuan’s side, the fish in the water had revealed its whole body. It was a fish with a peculiar appearance... Its head was two-thirds of its body and it was about half a meter in length in total. When it got dragged out of the water, it still bit the straw rope hard, with no intention of letting go.

“Don’t stop, and just keep pulling!” Seeing that the warriors were stunned and stood still with no inclination of helping, Shao Xuan told Caesar to continue pulling.

That was his first time pulling a fish. Aside from the surprise and vigilance of seeing an unknown object for the first time, Caesar quickly came back to his senses and obeyed Shao Xuan’s command. Shao Xuan stopped pulling after some time when he was certain that the fish could not jump back into the water.

“Finally! Good boy, Caesar! ...Caesar, let go!...Where are you taking that fish to?”

Caesar was still pulling the straw rope in his mouth, as he growled in a low voice through his throat. Obviously, the fish had made him vigilant resulting in him having some intention to fight it. He was pulling so devotedly that he continued his act and totally ignored the fact that Shao Xuan had released the rope already.

Caesar reluctantly let go at Shao Xuan’s repeated urging, and carefully approached the flapping fish, showing his teeth as if he was about to bite it.

It was only a few steps from where Shao Xuan was standing to the place the stone worm was floating in the water. It’s estimated that the water could not drown a person, yet unexpectedly, such a fierce fish found its habitat in such shallow waters.

It had a giant mouth filled with numerous tiny sharp teeth. Also, it was very persistent, biting hard on the bait and never letting go, as if it was trying to tear it apart. It still continued to flap its body and tail even though it was pulled out of the water.

One of the warriors used his bone spear to pierce the fish. He was very quick and strong, so his spear went through the fish and nailed it to the ground.

Only after the fish was pierced with the spear, did it opened its mouth and let go of the rope. It opened and closed its mouth constantly and tried to move its head as if it were trying to bite something else. After the straw rope was

released, there were only pieces of the stone worm left, and the straw rope was almost gnawed apart.

Shao Xuan had made the straw rope with his own hands, so he knew that the straw rope was very tough and abrasion-resistant. He often used it to pull or bundle things but it was never broken. Surprisingly, it only took such a short while for the fish to break it.

When his eyes fell upon the giant open mouth of that peculiar fish, Shao Xuan was stunned.

The giant mouth was the most noticeable thing among its head, and one could see numerous tiny sharp fangs in it. The fish was born to bite and kill since it possessed a mouthful of teeth on such a scale. If it weren't for Caesar's help, Shao Xuan would never have been able to pull it to the shore with his own strength.

If there were many fish of this kind in shallow water, a person could be eaten to his bones if he slipped and fell into the river. It was only one of the many types of fish in that river, perhaps more dreadful creatures were also living in the river. No wonders even totem warriors in the tribe were reluctant to go into the river.

Shao Xuan couldn't help but shudder at the thought that some kids in the tribe might slip into the water by mistake.

Also, the sudden image that flashed in his eyes when he pulled the rope seemed to be that of a giant mouth with tiny sharp teeth...

Shao Xuan stared at the giant mouth and he thought about the visions he saw on the stone wall in that remote village when he was living his last few minutes of his former life.

The warriors saw Shao Xuan staring at the fish and thought that he probably was too scared to go near the ferocious creature. This was Shao Xuan's first time seeing a fish like that, but one of the warriors had actually seen it before.

"When my totem power had not awakened, I came to the riverbank with my father and we met such a creature. The Shaman said that it's called 'Fish'. The water is filled with dangerous creatures. In our tribe, some woman's arm got ripped off when she was washing animal skins. My father stabbed one to death

at that time.”

The warrior glanced at Shao Xuan as he spoke, he did not think that a kid like Shao Xuan could pull out such a dangerous fish without even getting into the water. In old times, his father risked his life to go into the waters and save that woman from being eaten alive. Sadly, she still lost her arm by the time she was rescued. For a long time after that accident, women in the tribe would never come to the riverside to wash animal skins. They would only come here unless they had no alternative but to come, like when the weather was too dry and the stream in the hills got too narrow for people to drain water.

When Shao Xuan came back to himself, the fish was already dead. The warrior pulled out his spear and took the fish down. He handed the fish over to Shao Xuan, by lifting its tail.

“Here, it’s your prey. Good for you! You will grow into a fine warrior!” The warrior added after thinking, “But in the future, you should not go near to the river, because aside from fish, there is other stuff inside, and you can’t be lucky every time.”

However, about half an hour later, Shao Xuan, who “can’t be lucky every time”, pulled out an even bigger fish with the same method.

The two warriors were speechless , “...”



# Chapter 8 – The most beautiful word in the world

---

Translated by Sunyancai

The fish Shao Xuan pulled out this time was even larger in size than the first one, but Shao Xuan just knocked it out with a stone since he did not ask for the warrior's help. Even if the fish was merely unconscious, it could not survive without water.

With the fish hung on a tree with the straw rope, Shao Xuan took out the smaller fish which was speared through, and then he found a few dry branches.

Looking around, Shao Xuan noticed that the two warriors guarding the riverside were curiously looking at his direction, so he waved to them.

The two warriors hesitated, for they had already returned to their spot, but out of compulsive curiosity, they came back to Shao Xuan.

"What are you doing, Ah-Xuan? Are you going to eat that? Do you need our help?" The warrior asked having gotten Shao Xuan's name when he speared the fish to death.

They were scared and curious about creatures like fish. But since the fish had been dead, the guards had put their fear behind, and curiosity towards a new kind of quarry filled up in their hearts.

"Allow me this time, since you were in charge of killing earlier!" The other warrior stepped forward and quickly grasped the fish. He used his stone knife to cut it open and disemboweled its guts. While in the meantime, he discussed with his companion.

“Wow? Are those the intestines? So short...”

“Is that the stomach?”

“No, the stomach...that is the stomach, for sure!”

“Watch out...What’s that? Don’t break it. Perhaps it’s poisonous...”

“Where’s its heart? Cut more, move your knife... Ah, you’re no good at it...Let me demonstrate... you need to keep your hand steady to avoid the blood from flowing...”

The warriors were discussing enthusiastically, and Shao Xuan was standing aside, stunned and speechless.

Were they really hunting warriors? They acted just like weird forensic experts!

Two anatomy enthusiasts with an excessive curiosity!

No matter how bizarre the impression they struck in Shao Xuan’s mind, one had to admit that they were masters of anatomy! Even though it was their first time dismembering a fish, they did a quick and clean job. As they were cutting, they took the time to give Shao Xuan a lecture about the detailed dos and don’ts when hunting and killing an animal in the wild. For instance, some animal’s guts might be poisonous while some animals had poison sacs inside their bodies. Also, there were some kinds of animals that possessed delicious guts, but for unfamiliar creatures, people would normally not eat their viscera for safety’s sake.

Soon, the fish was handled and cut open, with its guts and gills removed.

“There are not many parts left to be eaten, but fortunately it’s large in size.” The warrior said as he cleaned the blood on his knife.

Since no one wanted to get near the waters again, the two warriors used some leaves to clean the fish and wipe the blood, then used those leaves to wrap its viscera and bury it besides the tree. They did that because the fishy smell might draw some extra and unnecessary attention. It would be fine in the tribe, but now they were pretty close to the river. Besides flying animals, there may be unknown creatures which were sensitive to blood. They had to be cautious and they reminded Shao Xuan to do the same, should he hunt alone

himself the next time.

The tools to make fire were not so primitive as Shao Xuan imagined before, it was some kind of a powder. Every totemic warrior was allowed to carry some of that powder. When making a fire, one would take out a stone spoon and place some powder inside, and then use a stone pestle to quickly grind it. Very soon the powder inside would become flames and turn the stone spoon into a small torch to ignite hay and branches.

Shao Xuan was pretty surprised when he saw Ge, who was in charge of delivering food to the orphan cave, lighting a fire with that powder. He thought that people in the tribe might be able to drill wood to make fire, or use flints, but he had never expected them to use such convenient tools. The children in the orphan cave did not have flammable powders, meaning they could only possess the powders when they become a totemic warrior and started their own life on the outside.

Sometimes, Shao Xuan would feel an odd contradiction when observing the tribe, as if the skills they mastered were uncoordinated with their developing levels.

But wondering was one thing, Shao Xuan did not think further for now.

One of the warriors tasted the grilled fish to make sure that it was edible, and tasty even. Three people and one wolf shared the whole fish. Two warriors could not be full with such little food, and Caesar was not particularly interested in cooked food in the first place, so he just ate a little. Shao Xuan was the only one that had a good meal from the fish.

After eating, the two warriors asked for the fish bone to be kept as a souvenir. Shao Xuan's instinct told him that they were planning to take the fish bone back to their hunting team to show it off in front of other warriors.

Later on, the two warriors returned to their guarding duty, as Shao Xuan took Caesar back to the orphan cave, carrying the other dead fish on a straw rope.

The sky grew dark and some of the kids in the orphan cave were already sleeping, while others were about to sleep, but a few were waiting for Shao

Xuan's return.

There was a bonfire inside lit up by Ge every afternoon, for kids to keep warm or cook food. It was the kindling fire, and Ku was in charge of putting it out every night before he went to sleep. In the future, Shao Xuan would be the one responsible for that too.

Standing at the entrance, Shao Xuan told Caesar to wait outside with the fish, while he took a deep breath and strode inside.

The awake kids were relatively older and they were thinking about something around the bonfire. As Shao Xuan went in, all eyes were moving with his footsteps. Shao Xuan could obviously feel their hatred, for he took the position they longed for.

After a few steps, he climbed up onto a giant stone in the shape of millstone not far from the entrance. That was the highest place in the cave and one could have a clear view of everywhere inside standing on it. That was where Ku distributed food.

Those few older kids approached. Shao Xuan looked at them and clapped his hands, "Get up! Everyone get up if you are not sleeping!"

Aside from those sound sleepers, everyone in the cave gradually came around.

Shao Xuan began his speech when he saw most of the kids were already here, and he spoke as he stared at those older kids in the front, "I know you are not convinced that I am the one to replace Ku and you want to take me down, so that you can take Ku's former position! You kept yourselves awake to do just that, right? But! Just know that Uncle Ge was the one that put me in charge! You can just go find Uncle Ge if you have any problems, resentments, complaints or grievances towards his decision! Troubling me won't help even a little bit!"

Those kids standing in the front frowned and clearly they were thinking the possibility of approaching Ge. Should they discuss it with Ge? Or perhaps Ge would be angry? Will he stop delivering food if he's angry? Then would they be starved without food? That way seemed impossible. The older kids had more thoughts than younger ones after all.

Xuan looked around and continued, “Have you ever wondered why I get to take Ku’s position? I’m younger and shorter than you guys, and I’m not even as strong as you. Why did Uncle Ge put me in charge?!”

“Because I’m better than you with more ability!” Shao Xuan said firmly and he did not blink twice for lying in front of everyone. In fact, how could Shao Xuan learn about the delivery man’s mind? He was thinking about having a good discussion about it with Ge tomorrow, himself. But at the moment, what he needed to do was to go through the night first by astonishing and alarming those little “wolf cubs”, or else he’ll have to watch his back all the time, in case they would unite together to mess around with him.

Shao Xuan did think about some soft ways, but those little bastards were too tough to handle. You couldn’t reason with them and based on Shao Xuan’s observation, Ge’s decision wouldn’t be changed in a short period of time. So, having been made responsible, Shao Xuan would have to be responsible for a while, and maybe longer. This left Shao Xuan no choice but to be mighty and handle the trouble once and for all.

The kids standing in the front were angry about Shao Xuan’s words; some even raised their eyebrows. But before they could speak, they got roared back by Shao Xuan, “All of you, keep your mouths shut!”

Then Shao Xuan shouted out, “Caesar!”

Caesar was waiting outside, and he promptly dragged the fish in at Shao Xuan’s call.

All eyes were fixed on Caesar until Shao Xuan went for the fish and lifted it up. Then they noticed that there was something else.

“See that? I hunted it and brought it back!”

Shao Xuan untied the straw rope to reveal the fish’s whole body, and he lifted it with its tail so that the kids might have a clearer view.

Many fish lacked eyelids and could not blink, so their eyes remained wide open even when they were dead.

Under the not-so-bright fire lights, the fish’s red eyes appeared to be somewhat strange and dim. Its mouth opened and closed as Shao Xuan waved

his hand, so the surrounding kids might see the numerous tiny sharp teeth in its mouth. The dirt on its scales got wiped out, so the fish reflected ghostly luminescence, which added the night's coldness.

The kids at the front couldn't help but take a step back. A minute earlier they were glaring at Shao Xuan, but now their eyes were filled with heavy fear and vigilance. In the meantime, their look towards Shao Xuan turned from hostile to discrete.

The tribe admires the strong. Powerful warriors may receive the expectation and worship from the entire tribe, and most of the time, people preferred simple and easy solutions when faced with troubles, and that solution was namely violence. Except for fighting each other, there was a simpler way to compete; by showing their game. Normally, a better game represented a stronger warrior.

For now, they were merely children with no totem power. This meant none of them were a totem warrior who could hunt outside, let alone bring any game back unless they robbed things from other kids. Hunting such a ferocious creature was impossible for each and every one of them.

It was obviously a tough creature. Look at its teeth! One could get bit very hard by those teeth!

"Can you hunt? Are you able to bring back such game, or any other edible things? Could you? You? Or you? Are any of you be able to do that?!"

The kids pointed at by Shao Xuan shrank backward again and shook their heads.

"Obviously you can't! So swallow all your resentment and emotions down, since you can't!"

After you punch someone with a stick, you'd better offer a carrot, so Shao Xuan needed to comfort them since he had already delivered his lecture.

He lifted the fish again.

"This is the gift I prepared for you all since today's my first day in charge!"

The crowd was quiet at his words, and it took a while for some kid to ask in a

trembling voice, “What does ‘gift’ mean?”

Another older kid continued the question, “Edible?”

Shao Xuan was shocked and then said, “...Yes.” So tiring.

Hong...

The atmosphere in the cave suddenly got heated up.

All emotions like resentment, vigilance, and grievances were gone in the wind.

In their perspective, “edible” must be the most beautiful word in the world.

# Chapter 9 – We believe in whatever you say, as long as it's good

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan was at best a small cave master for now, and in that cave lived a bunch of wimpy kids with irritable characters.

Shao Xuan processed the fish he brought back by cutting it open and removing its guts and gills, just like the warriors did. He discarded the waste to the rubbish place, where all the garbage and litter went. Inside the cave, the rubbish place was piled up by food residue and it would get cleaned by someone from the tribe every few days.

In addition to unchewable parts, the fish got eaten up completely, leaving some broken fish bones and its mouth which had tiny sharp teeth.

The kids in the cave all went to sleep after they shared the fish. Shao Xuan kept a small torch before putting out the bonfire, and then he held it to look at the depths of the cave. Originally he intended to store some food and animal skins before winter arrived, but now, since he took over the cave and found out a way for fishing, he planned to lead some kids to the river again and hunt for some more fish tomorrow. The tribe alone could not provide sufficient food, but if there was enough stored food then they could go through the winter smoothly.

Everyone in the tribe was preparing for winter, and people were seen making meat jerky every day since meat jerky could last longer. If Shao Xuan could manage to get more fish, not only would the situation in the orphan cave be improved, they could also use the fish to trade for animal skins and furs with



people in the tribe to keep themselves warm. Shao Xuan did not want to suffer from the cold.

Depending on the not-so-bright light from his torch, Shao Xuan roughly walked and looked around the cave. He remembered that last time he wandered inside the cave, it was shortly after he woke up in this world. On a whim, he took a walk in the cave, but after that, he never went into the depths.

As the saying goes, a new official applies strict measures. Shao Xuan intended to make his own rules since it was his roof now. Measures must be taken and the cave needed to be reorganized.

Before, the tribe was small and there were not a lot of people. Everyone lived in the cave and thus they made space allocations. There were sections for food, firewood, furs and animal skins, tools, weapons, inside toilets, *etc.* But as the population grew, more and more people began to move out and build their own houses, so the cave was used to raise orphans and began to get messy. Many places were emptied and dozens of kids were living near the entrance, with lots of spaces unused.

There were air vents in the depths, but due to it being vacant for too long, the vents were blocked making it dark even in daylight.

Shao Xuan returned to the entrance of the cave after his tour, and he extinguished his torch after making his straw bed with the bundle of hay which he had aired in the sun. However, that night, for no specific reason, he found it hard to fall asleep. His mind was haunted by things in the cave, the fish in the river, and the illusion he had during fishing.

As he was thinking, Shao Xuan felt someone or something staring at him. He did not know who, or what that was.

The cave was dark since there was no fire. Moonlight sprinkled down through air vents and it brought in some faint blue light, which only appeared during the night.

All the kids were asleep and sounds of snoring could be heard here and there. The entrance had already been blocked by a heavy straw curtain, with no abnormal sound or scene.

Beside Shao Xuan, Caesar was sleeping safe and sound. Signaling that there should be no danger since Caesar was unaware of any strangeness.

Unless there were some kids staring at him?

Shao Xuan tightened his animal skin clothes as he shook his head. He planned to sleep, as he was going to take some wimpy kids out for fishing tomorrow.

But not long after he closed his eyes, Shao Xuan felt a dark shadow flying by his side. It went so fast that Shao Xuan did not have the time to have a clear look. After the flash of the shadow, pairs of eyes with faint blue sparkles appeared.

What was that? Shao Xuan was startled and suddenly he opened his eyes.

The surroundings were the same just as before. It was dark inside and only moonlight sprinkled down little bit hazy light.

Now Shao Xuan had completely lost his drowsiness. He rolled over and saw that the air vent had been dug out on the top of the wall .

Normally there would be no danger with the air vent, so it wouldn't be blocked at night.

Shao Xuan got up after some thinking. He could easily see the outside through the air vent, for the place where he slept at had high terrain.

With moonlight on the outside, it was brighter, and one could vaguely see the nearby scenery .

There was a five-meter-high pillar outside the cave, and that was from ancient times. At first, it served as a sundial, people living in the cave could estimate time based on the pillar's shadow under sunlight. Now with no adults in the cave, children began to carve and draw on it. As time went by, it was no longer what it used to be. Now it stood there, full of bumps and hollows with merely an approximate shape.

At the moment, there was a bird standing at the top of it.

Shao Xuan knew what it was. He first expected it to be some kind of a bat when he saw it. But afterward, he learned that it was a swallow-like bird. It was quick when flying and only came out at night. It's a meat-eating creature.

People in the tribe called it Night Swallow, which was very similar to a bat's

nickname that Shao Xuan knew. Too bad that they were far more ferocious than bats and they were also highly gregarious, so they lived and moved in swarms.

That was also the reason why few people in the tribe would go out at night without a torch. They may easily get attacked by Night Swallows.

Normally a Night Swallow's voice could not be heard, but it's told in the tribe that powerful warriors could hear its cry. It was said to be cacophony but it was only a tale told by people, and most of them haven't heard it in person.

Just as Shao Xuan looked up at the pillar, the Night Swallow resting on top looked back incisively at Shao Xuan as well.

Under the moonlight, its eyes reflected faint blue sparkles, just as what Shao Xuan had seen in his mind with his eyes closed.

Night Swallows would never come inside through air vents because they preferred to attack single targets and they preferred to attack in groups. For over half a year, Shao Xuan had never seen a single Night Swallow fly inside the cave. But he was certain that someone who goes outside alone without a torch would very likely get attacked.

Slightly breathing out, Shao Xuan decided not to look outside and go back to sleep.

But he knew that because of the flashing shadow with faint blue eyes in his mind, Shao Xuan could not fall asleep soon.

It seemed that he could "see" the upcoming danger. The fish in daytime, for instance. And the bird standing outside was just another example.

The weather was fine the next morning, bright and shiny. As usual, Shao Xuan bundled his hay and prepared to take them out later.

Clapping his hands, Shao Xuan said to the bodies lying on the ground, "Wake up, wake up! How many of you are awake? Get up now and go fishing with me!"

No one reacted.

“The fish is edible, just like the one from yesterday.” Shao Xuan continued.

There was some little movement, but still, most of them did not react. Some kids were still sleeping soundly as if nothing could wake them up. While some were hesitating over Shao Xuan’s words, even though they woke up already. After all, they had developed a habit of sleeping all day aside from the time for eating. It could not be changed by Shao Xuan’s simple words. They were used to sleeping until afternoon, and then waking up for food. There were also some people opening their eyes unconsciously, and then they fell asleep again after yawning.

In the end, out of over twenty children, four came outside the cave with Shao Xuan, with the eldest two kids among them. The other two kids were called Tu and Ba. Tu was weak and timid, who did not match up with his name which represented slaughter. Ba was relatively gentle in character when it’s not related to food, but he always stammered when talking. Those two were both eleven years old, but with a different physique. Ba was obviously taller than Tu and he looked alike with those thirteen-year-olds. In comparison, Tu was skinny and weak, just like Shao Xuan.

Shao Xuan asked Caesar to dig out some stone worms. He took out the straw rope and black half sphere from yesterday and led the four kids to the riverside.

The guarding warriors were still the same two people because they had spent the night there. Only after three days, could they be replaced by other guarding warriors. Seeing Shao Xuan approaching, they even greeted him with a smile and chatted with him.

That was pretty strange in the eyes of the other four kids, as they had never encountered a similar situation. The two elder kids did not want to compete and fight with Shao Xuan after yesterday’s event, and their will to fight faded even more seeing their current circumstances. From their point of view, getting along with warriors in the tribe could be very benefitting. They could step out and lend a hand when you’re in trouble. Earlier, Ku was very much admired because he knew someone living in the hillside.

Shao Xuan prepared his stuff and explained to the four what to do next.

“...It’s actually quite simple. Later on, just follow my command, do as I say,

and we will then share and eat the fish we catch.”

As expected, the four pairs of eyes lit up at the word “eat”, and their fear of seeing the water faded away.

With the limited length of the straw rope, Shao Xuan did not plan to place the bait very far. Also, this time he did not ask for Caesar’s help. The four kids replaced Caesar and were standing at the end of the rope, while Caesar squatted beside them quietly.

The four kids were rather nervous as they grasped the rope. Except for the anxiety they had facing water creatures for the first time, they were excited about their first time fishing.

“Okay, now we stand still. Wait for my signal later.” Shao Xuan said as he tossed the bait and glanced at the water surface.

Soon, there were some movements in the water. Since it was his third time fishing, Shao Xuan had some experience and immediately shouted without hesitation, “Now pull!”

At Shao Xuan’s words, the four kids grasped the rope tightly and pulled backward with full strength. The four of them combined were stronger than Caesar and they pulled the fish smoothly. The pulled out fish was the same size as yesterday’s first one.

That was the first time they saw a living fish, and that was a lethal one! So, when Shao Xuan told them to stop, they picked up their wooden sticks and smashed towards the fish hard. Especially Tu, he was scared but he deliberately approached and hit the fish on its head. As he was striking, he also screamed like hell, which made Shao Xuan angry, making him want to beat Tu up.

“Okay, okay... That’s enough!” Shao Xuan stopped their attacks and pulled those kids away, with sticks still held in their hands.

At first, Shao Xuan mentioned that the fish might be fierce so they needed to take some long weapons, just in case. Now those kids were prepared, but unfortunately, with all kinds of emotions combines, they attacked madly with all their strength, since it was their first hunting trip outside. The four of them grouped together, so when Shao Xuan stopped them from hitting that fish, the

fish was already smashed into jam...

How could anyone eat that pile of jam...

The first one was ruined. So, Shao Xuan guided them to hunt for another one. The second time, they finally calmed down and the fish was relatively better looking. Shao Xuan cut it open and removed its guts and gills. He borrowed flammable powders from the two warriors and grilled the fish.

The fish Shao Xuan took back last night was large in size, but with too many bones and too many kids, the fish meat distributed to everyone's mouth was rather little. But that was not the same today.

Five people sharing a half-meter fish, each one could get a large slice even with the bones.

All four kids were very excited, but with scarce vocabulary, they did not know how to express their feelings. So all they did was laugh, and they were all laughing like idiots.

"So delicious!" Tu said.

"Yes, it's good for the brain." Shao Xuan replied.

"What's brain? Good for the brain?" asked a kid.

Shao Xuan thought about it and decided to keep the explanation simple, "It means that you may grow better."

"Grow....grow...better? Is that...Does...Does that...mean that.... that....that we can....be stronger? Like...like totem...like totem warriors? "

Hearing Ba's words, the other three kids looked up at Shao Xuan, with sparkling lights in their eyes.

Even though kids in the cave were hot-tempered, they did not tend to hide their feelings. So one could easily define their minds through their facial expressions.

While at that moment, the facial expressions on these four kids were clearly suggesting that: Tell us now, please tell us now! We believe in whatever you say, as long as it's good!

So Shao Xuan swallowed the words he was about to say and he hesitated a while before he nodded, contrary to his convictions.

Water was slowly washing the riverside, and on the surface it seemed quiet and calm. However, Shao Xuan had just “seen” a picture of a fish with a mouthful of sharp teeth. It was much larger than the vision from yesterday but paler. Perhaps that fish was farther away from where he was standing.

In this endless freshwater river, numerous dangers coexisted, as well as opportunities.

In here they’ll find their food to survive the winter, Shao Xuan told himself.

# Chapter 10 – Follow me and get meat in return

---

Translated by Sunyancai

After eating, the five of them caught another six fish through joint efforts. One fish was given to Caesar, not grilled, for he liked to eat raw food. As for the remaining five, Shao Xuan and the other four kids each took one of the fish as their trophies.

When Shao Xuan led the four people back, Uncle Ge, who was in charge of delivering food, was already in the cave and waiting outside because he had not found Shao Xuan.

The kids in the cave had already had their biological clock formed, so they woke up naturally every day when it was time for them to eat. Also, after a long day's sleep, it was their most energetic moment when they woke up. However, Shao Xuan was not at the cave, and Uncle Ge wouldn't distribute the food just yet. The kids were hungry and began to turn anxious. Two of them even fought with each other because of some minor issue, and both of them bled from their noses.

Uncle Ge sat in silence at the edge of the cave, with a stone crock filled with food. He ignored these kids' fights and did not let them go near the stone crock.

Dozens of children gathered around the stone crock but they did not dare to get any closer. Whoever tried to steal the food would get kicked away by Uncle Ge, and he would get less food than others, in the end, they dared not risk it.

Uncle Ge, who was sitting at the edge of the stone crock and looking up at the



sky while thinking of something, suddenly noticed something and looked not too far into the distance. He saw 5 children and a wolf walking over, the person leading them is the new Cave Leader Shao Xuan.

However, when Uncle Ge's gaze fell on what they were pulling, his eyes widened and he fell down from the stone crock from too much excitement.

.....

Before Shao Xuan and his companion got near, Uncle Ge couldn't help but jump off the stone vat and walk toward him. But only after a few steps, he turned back and then carried the stone crock with him to approach them. If he left it there those brats in the cave would definitely steal the food.

"This....This....Is this ...fish?!" Uncle Ge pointed at the fish in Shao Xuan's hand and asked.

Because of an accident in the river many years ago, Ge had seen this creature before but since their tribal leader doesn't allow anyone to go in the river, so he never saw it again. He didn't think that he would see it again today.

"How did you get it?"

If it was just luck there is no way to get this many. One is rare enough, could something have happened to cause a large amount of dead fish to appear on the shore? That shouldn't be possible, there are some people guarding the river so if anything had happened they would already have reported. Also, there are signs of being hit by sticks on the fish.

Hiss...

After Uncle Ge saw the fish's open mouth and the sharp teeth he couldn't help but suck in a breath of cold air. He is a very experienced hunter and can calculate a creature's personality and attack power from each creature's appearance. This is clearly a very lethal creature, even a totem warrior with powerful physical ability wouldn't want to fight this creature. He couldn't understand how these weak little kids, who hadn't awakened their totem power yet, caught these fish.

The two older kids next to Shao Xuan couldn't hold it in anymore and proudly told Uncle Ge about their morning "hunt" to show off their bravery. Showing off their ability in front of experienced soldiers would help them get into the

hunting teams and is something the kids in the tribe liked to do.

The two kid's descriptions didn't quite follow any order but Uncle Ge, who had a lot of experience in hunting, could guess more of what happened from their words. He looked at Shao Xuan with a complicated look and said, "Let's distribute the food first."

The children in the cave saw the fish Shao Xuan and his companions held and surrounded them. The four people beside Shao Xuan quickly became alerted, even the face of the previously good natured Ba became vicious. One of his hands threw the fish behind him and the other hand held a wooden stick. If anyone dared to come and steal the fish then he was going to go all out on them.

Since Caesar was guarding Shao Xuan's fish, none of the kids in the tribe would dare to try and steal it, so their gaze could only fall on the other four. Luckily it was time for distributing food so their attention was drawn away again.

Although it was the first time Shao Xuan distributed the food, he had seen how Ku did it, so he easily caught on. He even saved food for the four that were helping him guard their fish.

Uncle Ge just stood on the side and watched Shao Xuan finish distributing the food. Then he looked at Shao Xuan's fish, picked up the crock, looked at the fish again, walked two steps, looked at the fish again, not really wanting to leave. As with the two guards at the river, he didn't want to eat it but was just very curious about the fish.

Unfortunately, Shao Xuan didn't give him a chance to observe or explanation, just like whoever let him suddenly become the cave leader had not explained the reason.

No one in the tribe had given these fish a name so Shao Xuan called them "Piranha Fish."

Shao Xuan noticed a long time ago that inside the cave there were some devices used to hang stuff in the upper portion of the cave, it was unknown how many years it had been since they were last used. Shao Xuan first used his fish to test it, he was able to hang it there, and the stone hook didn't seem to

be breaking.

Seeing Shao Xuan do this the other four also asked Shao Xuan to help them hang their fish. There was no way for one of them to finish such a large fish by themselves and they didn't want to share with the others, so they had to prevent the other kids from stealing them so it was best to hang them up. The other end of the straw rope was tied to the wall. The four of them each guarded their rope because they felt safer when they guarded their trophies.

The other orphan kids in the cave began to regret not following Shao Xuan in the morning since they saw those four kids each getting one fish of their own.

In contrast, Shao Xuan also took the opportunity to ingrain the kids with a thought – 'follow me and get meat in return'.

Want to tag along tomorrow? Sure, but...

"You have to listen to me." Shao Xuan said.

It was not easy for the kids in the cave to listen to anybody. Striking them, again and again, wouldn't help for even a little bit. Many of the kids in the tribe were very stubborn, violence-resistant and they were ready to risk everything. If you beat them up this time, they'll still try to steal or rob your things the next time. Even when the "former cave master" Ku was around, the children did not get along well. Many of them got beaten up by Ku, and Shao Xuan had in fact witnessed some of those fights. It was pretty severe, and the loser would have to recover for more than ten days to be able to stand on his feet again.

However, now, with Shao Xuan's theory of "follow me and get meat in return," everyone was appeased.

The next day, Shao Xuan told those kids to weave straw ropes. In this time of the year, there was a lot of grass that could be processed into a straw rope. It was easy to find raw materials, but not everyone in the cave knew how to weave them. There were a few kids who had learned the skill from their parents, but they had never practiced it since their parents passed away.

There were originally twenty-seven children in the cave. Since former master Ku had left, and there was one silent kid who was not always around, only twenty-five children remained in the cave. Shao Xuan divided them into five

groups, with five kids in each group. Within every group, there was someone who knew how to weave. Then Shao Xuan told them about the division of labor and cooperation. Someone would go to collect grass, while the others would be in charge of weaving and finding stone worms.

Except, these kids were not fans of cooperation. They would fight each other over some of the tiniest things, even when they were in the same group.

After Shao Xuan had quelled the conflicts, he thought for a moment and changed his way of expressing,

Now each group is a small hunting team! It's your own hunting team!"

Small hunting team...

Those were magic words to those dozens of children, and all of them began to fantasize about it.

In the mind of those kids from the tribe, "hunting team" was a very fancy and bright term, that only warriors with totemic powers could join.

Joining a hunting team would mean lots of food.

Joining a small hunting team was so thrilling and unexpected! They could begin to hunt!

Shao Xuan looked at the crowd and said, "Okay, now whoever wants to quit, or disobeys my commands, or loves to fight each other, stand out now and you won't be included in our mission!"

No one moved.

The kid standing at the very front looked at his surroundings and felt himself standing too far out, so he hurried and stepped back, for fear that he might be misunderstood as one who wanted to quit.

The one who just beat another kid in his group also acted pretty seriously, and stood there still, not slightly feeling that he belonged to the "loves to fight each other" kind of people.

"Fine, since nobody wants to quit now, let's go! Just a reminder that you shall all follow my orders! Anyone who disobeys will get thrown out of the small hunting team!"

Shao Xuan used "hunting team" as a threat because he knew what they were afraid of. These children had a bad temper, but they were simple-minded. You

can control them as long as you know what they cared about.

As expected, this time they behaved much better. However, when it came to the real mission, it didn't as smoothly as predicted.

Along the riverside.

Those two guarding warriors were standing not far away and they smiled as they watched Shao Xuan being busy commanding the kids to catch fish. In a fit of anger, he would just beat some kid, and the one that got beaten would just roll on the ground, stand up, wipe off the blood on his face with a smile, and then get back to work as normal.

All their dull eyes were sparkling today, especially when they would see a fish pulled out of the water. Some of them would even make a few jumps in order to vent their feelings of thrill and excitement. If the fish weren't that aggressive with their mouthful of tiny sharp teeth that could bite their flesh off easily, they would hug the fish in their arms and take a huge bite as their unique marks.

For days, Shao Xuan would take them fishing. There were lots of fish in the waters, so they harvested a lot every day. Even if they ate with an empty belly, there would still be leftovers. However, perhaps out of the fear of hunger, those children would naturally think about storing food for bad days. Some of them got the habit from their parents and the others were just following what others were doing blindly.

For the kids in the orphan cave, those few days were their happiest since living there, and as time went by, they looked more energetic than ever. Some sleepy heads would get up earlier than Shao Xuan and wake him up. At night, they would lay on the ground and stare at those big fish hanging on the top. Even when the fire was out, they would keep staring. Shao Xuan could sometimes hear their chuckles in the middle of the night, which was extremely creepy...What the fu\*k!

# Chapter 11 Recording and counting numbers

---

Translated by Sunyancai

All kids in the cave had been in a state of extreme excitement these days. Just like when the poor turned rich overnight, they'd be incredibly hyper. And the consequences of being driven by excitement was quite simple – fighting.

When they were not fishing, they fought each other in the cave.

In the past, they fought over food, now they still fought over food, but in a different kind of way. Now, they would usually fight protecting their own food, instead of robbing or stealing food from the others. Sometimes they would just beat the one who wrongly took their fish by mistake when bringing their quarries back.

The fighting was not one versus one since Shao Xuan had inculcated the idea that groups were a different version of a small hunting team, the tradition of one versus one had developed into gang fights. Thus the war between groups and teams were more intense than ever.

Shao Xuan sat aside and sighed, for he was the one who brought this upon himself.

After seeing that a kid's dragging of the wrong fish triggered yet another battle between two groups, Shao Xuan thought for a while and set his eyes on a smooth wall near the entrance, regardless of the messy situation inside the cave.

A long time ago, when everyone in the tribe was living in the cave, they polished the wall and carved letters on it. Afterward, all residents in the cave were kids, and no more letters were added there. Even when someone had the

whim to paint, they would only paint or carve near the bottom. In the higher places, there were only ancient traces left.

All traces on the wall were different in depth and carving or painting patterns, because of their different ages. Some of them were painted by pigment produced by plants, and some of them were strictly carved by a stone knife. Many traces had already turned fuzzy and discolored. It was just a waste to keep them there since no one could tell their original meanings.

Shao Xuan called those super excited and super energetic whelps together and told them to pick up stones to polish the wall.

Deep down the cave, there were some relatively larger stones, which they carried out together. Because of their limited height, the children would have to stand on those stones to reach the upper sections of the wall.

Since they had something to do to kill the time, the undisciplined kids began to fit in their places. Besides, this was Shao Xuan's command so no one objected to it. Even if reluctant, they would still grab a stone and polish a little.

Because the wall was already polished by the former residents, the kids would only need to grind the surface to remove the original marks. When it was almost done, Shao Xuan stood up on a big stone and used a burnt branch, as a pen. He wrote down five numbers representing five groups on the top of the wall, and in detail explained which group they belonged to. But still, Shao Xuan wrote down each of the group's member's names just to be on the safe side.

Every once in awhile, someone in the tribe would be sent to the cave to teach some basic knowledge to the children. For example, counting numbers and commonly used words. That was how Shao Xuan got to know the language here. However, other kids in the cave were unwilling to listen, so they rarely learned anything new. Shao Xuan was the only one who paid attention when a teacher came to the cave.

Every kid in the orphan cave would wear a stone tablet with his or her name on it. Although they did not know many letters and couldn't write, they could still recognize their own names.

After writing down the groups and names, the fish they brought back would be recorded on the wall. At first Shao Xuan meant to use simple numbers to

record how many fish they had dragged back for each group, but the kids weren't satisfied with that. Looking up at the fish hanging up in the cave, Shao Xuan drew some fish in stick figures on the wall. It was an abstract fish, quite simple to draw and easy to be recognized.

Finally, those whelps were satisfied, and they even made the smartest kid in each group verify that the quantity on the wall matched with the exact number of fish hanging in the air.

Shao Xuan could draw one fish in one stroke, and there were in total dozens of fish, so it took a short time to complete the chart. Besides, the wall was extremely wide and tall, so it could contain over a thousand fish painted on it.

There was an air vent at the top of the wall, opposite to where Shao Xuan drew all the fish. During daylight, the sun would shine on the wall, which made all the markings on the wall pretty obvious.

So, every day when not fishing, the kids sat with their group members and wove straw ropes, they would constantly look up on the wall, and count their fish, then they looked at the real fish hanging on the hooks and checked the numbers. Due to this, their counting abilities were improving very quickly. Those who used to be reluctant to count would count at least ten times a day or more, without anyone pushing them.

“Ah-Xuan, is twelve the one after ten?”

“It's eleven!”

“Okay... Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen...It's not right, Ah-Xuan, why are there only fourteen fish in our team? There are fifteen on the wall! One is missing! Who took our fish?!!!”

Before the sentence was finished, the kid, together with the other four in his group, grasped sticks and stones with ferocious looks and scanned at other kids in the cave with gloomy eyes.

Shao Xuan took a deep breath and pointed the wall with a branch, “Didn't you see that the first fish on the wall is crossed with a thick slash? That means that you have already eaten the fish! Actually, you ate the fish last night! Will you vomit up the things in your bellies to confirm it? I – can – help – you – with – that!”



“...It’s true.” The kid thought for a moment with his head crooked, as he eased himself down. He put his stick down and sat with the other four kids, as they continued to weave straw ropes as if nothing had happened earlier.

“Ah-Xuan, I heard from Uncle Ge that tomorrow we will have good weather. Shall we go to the riverbank tomorrow?” A kid asked expectedly.

All the other kids’ attention was focused on Shao Xuan as they stared at him hopefully. It seems that they would all have their hearts broken, should Shao Xuan provide them with a “No” answer.

“Yes, tomorrow we will go there as usual.” Shao Xuan looked up at the sky as he walked out of the cave.

Now, these dozens of kids were all working together. Indeed, they were voracious and they would love to go fishing all day, but still, deep down in their hearts, they knew it’s for the best that everyone worked together. They had to, the main reason being that they could not find stone worms by themselves.

Shao Xuan had tried many kinds of worms that could be found in the tribe as bait, but stone worms were the best and most efficient ones. For those who did not obey orders and acted alone, Shao Xuan would not give any stone worms to them.

“Undisciplined but you still want stone worms? Fine, go and find your own.” Without Caesar, one would have spent all day searching and only capture a few of them. Those stone worms were much quicker than earthworms, one would only return empty handed if they could not catch them immediately upon seeing them. Everyone depended on Caesar’s help to get stone worms!

The second reason that they had to work together, was that they could not get the small black floats by themselves. To get those, they must catch a black worm that lived in the black swamp. It’s such a shame that aside from Caesar, no one could go near the black swamp.

Due to these reasons, Caesar had a higher position in the cave. At least now, the kids were not seeing Caesar as food. Some flexible kids even learned how to fawn over Caesar. Since they’ve seen Caesar gnawing animal bones, they would toss fish bones to him. However, Caesar was not interested in fish bones.

No matter what, these whelps had eased their relationship with Caesar, so Shao Xuan no longer worried about whether they would join together and roast Caesar alive.

The next day, Shao Xuan was woken up by the kids, and then together they ran to the gravel yard to dig stone worms. Every time Caesar caught one, Shao Xuan would distribute it to a team leader of a group. One stone worm could be used for two or three times. After a stone worm was dug out, they would cut it into two pieces. After a few minutes, the two ends would grow into two separate worms. Given enough time, they could grow into the same length as before, as if they were never cut in half.

When they were all set, Shao Xuan led them to the riverbank. The guarding warriors were different people from before, but Shao Xuan soon got to know them well. These days they all watched those children fishing, and at the end of the day, Shao Xuan would give them one fish as a gift. So he left the warriors with a good impression, and warriors had changed their views on the children in the cave as well.

Seeing the waters, all the whelps got excited. They hurried to set the bait but were immediately stopped by Shao Xuan.

“Stop! Step back! All of you! Do not touch the water! Do not toss the bait yet!”

Shao Xuan held the first kid in the front and threw him backward as he stared at the surface of the water and frowned.

Something’s wrong today.

# Chapter 12 – Beat them up

---

Translated by Sunyancai

It was indeed a sunny day today.

The surface of the river was quite calm and quiet. A few days earlier, wind would blow up light waves that washed against the shore. However, there was no such scene today, for there was no wind at all.

It's too calm, weirdly calm.

The water was the opposite of clear. At the shore it was fine, but a meter away from the shore where the water was deeper, no one could see the situation down there.

In such a dangerous world where no common sense could be applied to, even the slightest detailed risk could not be ignored or underestimated. Ignorance led to death. For what's worse, just like the black swamp, the river was originally regarded as a high risk zone by people in the tribe. All the fishing in the past few days did not mean that it was safe.

Seeing Shao Xuan acted like that, all the kids got puzzled but still they stopped what they were doing and stepped backwards, even though one minute earlier they were very excited. Yes, they were voracious and no one would describe them as smart kids. But they were not stupid and every one of them cherished their lives. Also, Shao Xuan had earned their trust after all these days' leadership, so they all stared at Shao Xuan for his further command after they stepped back.

Shao Xuan stood at the bank, thinking as he looked at the quiet waters.

The surface was still calm, and aside from that, it was just like another normal day. The water did not change its color and nothing suspicious could be observed.

Was he just being paranoid?

Suddenly, some white translucent creatures appeared in front of Shao Xuan. They were similar to some upside-down shuttlecocks, with lots of whisker-like tentacles. And they move as the tentacles swayed.

Judging from former experiences, Shao Xuan learnt that such circumstances do not appear for no reason. There should be that kind of creatures in the water, and they are supposed to be very dangerous.

Shao Xuan grasped a straw rope with a stone worm tied on its end, and tossed it into the river. It dropped at a spot that was less than two meters away from the bank. However, from the other end of the straw rope he held in his hands, Shao Xuan did not sense any intense struggle like a piranha taking the bait.

The black float was vibrating gently. One would assume that it came from the stone worm's struggle if not observing carefully. But Shao Xuan was very familiar with the stone worms' struggle beneath the water since he had quite some experiences in fishing. The truth now was that, the vibration amplitude of the black float on the surface was slightly smaller than before, and it had a trend of getting smaller and smaller.

Shao Xuan pulled back the straw rope, and every whelp got around together as the stone worm revealed itself.

The stone worm did not get bitten, but its whole body turned pale. It shrank to some extent and remained the stiff twisted posture as it was dropped into the water.

Placing the changed stone worm on the ground, Shao Xuan used the back of his stone knife to strike on its body.

Click!

After a slight sharp snap, the stone worm was broken into pieces as if it was made of glass. It had no more the soft body as before.

All the whelps standing aside began to feel extreme terror. Would a person turn dry and crisp if he were in the river?

No one dared to try, and they moved away without the slightest intention to touch the water.

Shao Xuan tossed another few stone worms down the water, and every time it was the same result. Only after a few seconds, a lively stone worm would become a crisp dried worm, and no fish would take the bait no matter how long it had been placed in the water.

“Either the fish have no interest in dried worms, or there is no fish nearby at all! Perhaps all the fish has run away since something dreadful is in the water. I guess they will only return after that kind of creature leaves.” Shao Xuan took back the straw rope and analyzed.

“Then... when will the fish return?” asked a kid. Now kids from the cave did not fear that ferocious-looking piranhas, instead, they look forward seeing them, and piranhas were missed dearly even with only one day’s absence.

“Not sure. We’ll come back and check tomorrow.” Shao Xuan shook his head and he even went to the guarding warriors and explained the situation, to warn them that they should pay extra attention to keep people in the tribe from going into the river. Also, he left a dried stone worm so that they could review on it.

“Let’s go back. We shall weave more straw rope for next time’s fishing.” Shao Xuan advised. The consumption of straw rope was quite large, for normal straw rope had bad qualities so it would break only after a few times’ fishing. Since they could not go fishing today, Shao Xuan asked them to collect enough grass and sit in the cave to weave straw ropes.

Even though seeing that dried stone worm made the kids terrified, their hearts were filled more with reluctance and unwillingness.

How many fish could they have captured if it were just another fishing day today? At least four! They could have gotten more, if Caesar had dug out more stone worms. For the sake of their own lives, fishing was no longer an option for

today. According to Ah-Xuan's words, they should come back and check tomorrow. But what if tomorrow was no different than today? And what would happen the day after tomorrow? Then what would happen ever after? What if they could never go fishing?

It was too scary to even think about it.

The children in the cave were anxious, and their minds were wandering even when they were physically weaving straw ropes in the cave.

Shao Xuan sat at the entrance of the cave, rethinking about the creature he "saw" earlier as he bathed himself in the sunlight. Incidentally he would think about the coming winter.

That day, many people got driven back by the guarding warriors when they tried to go fishing at the river.

A few days earlier, residents in mountain foot area noticed that the children in orphan cave became diligent. In the past, they would simply sleep, eat, and occasionally go rob some things. However, now everyday they went out and they would only return from the riverside in the afternoons when food was supposed to be distributed. Also, every time when they returned, they had dragged back some arm-length odd fish with a giant head and numerous mouthful sharp tiny teeth, tied with straw rope.

Men with curiosity followed them and wanted to learn the skills of fishing. However, first of all it was difficult for them to dig out stone worms, and with the lack of alternative bait, it was pretty hard for them to capture a fish with merely a straw rope. Secondly, even if they had dug out stone worms, or they had used some other things as bait, it was still difficult for them to capture a fish as easily as Shao Xuan and his companions. Sometimes, the things they fished out were alien and strange and one could get his body swollen like a ham with a single touch.

Finally, those men noticed that Shao Xuan was using some black thing that could float above the water surface, and that black float was the only thing that Shao Xuan had yet they didn't possess. Indeed, the harvest was not ideal when one did not use that equipment.

Shao Xuan had actually analyzed why that happened. Those piranhas

probably didn't like to live in the bottom of the river, while the straw rope with a bait tended to sink under the water. Stone worms, on the other hand, would easily flee once they touched dirt and rocks from the bottom. Those two factors added up to the result of a bad harvest.

These days, Shao Xuan asked Caesar to catch more of those worms from the black swamp, and obtained more black floats. He used them to trade for some meat and animal skins. The meat was not much and he shared it with kids in the cave the day he got it back. As for the animal skins, although it was not fine in the quality, it could absolutely make the coming winter less harsh for them.

Because of that, aside from the kids from the cave, the residents in the mountain-foot district who had no hunting missions were also fishing tirelessly. No one would complain for too much food. Winter was coming and man could only feel at ease when he had enough food stored.

However, everyone was disappointed today.

Shao Xuan sighed at another group of people returning from the riverside, upset and unsatisfied.

Unexpectedly, Caesar, who was lying beside, suddenly stood up and stared at one direction.

Shao Xuan looked at that direction.

About twenty meters away from the entrance of the cave, there were some giant stones. Normally if the weather was fine, kids would lie there and bath in the sunlight. However, now few would go because they were kept busy all day long. At this time, no one was supposed to be on the stones, but Shao Xuan observed that someone was there, for a little bit of animal skin was exposed at the edge of it.

Even based on the little part of animal skin, Shao Xuan had recognized that it was Sai, who used to rob away Shao Xuan's things and once got beaten up by Shao Xuan at the training ground. Usually Ye and Zhan would follow Sai everywhere, they also came today.

The day before yesterday when Shao Xuan was taking Caesar to catch worms in the black swamp, these three kids blocked Shao Xuan at the gravel yard to

rob him of the black floats. They fought but at that time, kids from the cave also came so Sai and his companions quickly ran away. Perhaps the three of them did not give up, and they thought they could steal something in here.

They dared not rob the fish, because there was a clear rule in the tribe that no one should take the food in orphan cave, however, the fishing equipment did not belong to the “food” category.

Shao Xuan touched his jaw. He tapped on Caesar and told him to wait, while he turned around and entered the cave.

“Hey, you all!” Shao Xuan shouted out at the kids in the cave, “Lately you have all behaved pretty well, and we captured lots of fish, which is good! If the situation continues, we will not suffer from starvation this winter, with all the food from the tribe. But, what shall we do if now someone wants to come down here and rob our things?”

The eyes of the kids were lit up when they heard Shao Xuan’s voice, for they thought it was time to go fishing. However, when they realized it was not about fishing, the enthusiasm quickly cooled down. But, all emotions were replaced by anger when they understood what Shao Xuan was implying.

Rob things?

Beat them up!!

No fish and they only want to rob the fishing equipment?

That’s also a No!!

What’s the meaning of “steal”? Oh... you say that taking without informing is called “steal”? That’s basically the same as “rob”?! Beat them up hard!!

Shao Xuan had said before, that to those little whelps, “eat” must be the most beautiful word in the world. Food is the specific interpretation of that word. They would fight with full spirit with whoever that wanted to rob away their food. Taking their food equaled to taking their most treasured thing.

At that time, Sai with his two minions were just discussing how they planned to take some black floats when no one was watching and then leave quietly.



The discussion was heating up when Caesar jumped down out of nowhere and pounced on them.

It was so sudden, that these three could only jump away out of reflex, quite terrified.

Sai's heart raced with the shock as he stared at Caesar with a stick tightly held in his hands. He was still afraid but he decided to swing the stick as long as the wolf took one step forward.

Thinking too attentively, Sai did not notice the surroundings, until Ye and Zhan poked at him.

“What are you poking for? Didn't you see me...”

Sai turned and roared, but before he could finish his words, he finally looked along Ye and Zhan's sights, and saw those dozens of whelps standing at the entrance of the cave, with sticks and rocks in their hands, and fierce anger flashing in their eyes.

# Chapter 13 – Mo-Er

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Sai and his two minions did not manage to steal anything, but instead, were chased after by two dozen kids from the cave, like rats on the street

In that afternoon, almost every resident in the mountain-foot district saw the surprising scene. After all, normally Sai, together with Zhan and Ye was the one who bullied other kids. And in the past, kids from the orphan cave would not be so united. They usually acted alone, and no less than half of them got beaten up by Sai before. However, now one expected them to be so united. Over twenty kids ran after Sai and his minions' tails. After just a short period of time, Sai and his minions were beaten up hard. They would've suffered even more if it weren't for the fact that their parents came to their rescue.

That particular incident also helped the people in the mountain-foot district refresh their understanding towards the kids in the cave. It turned out that these children knew how to be united against a common enemy. Some people with evil thoughts also had to hide their thoughts seeing those circumstances.

Fighting was nothing. Kids in the tribe feared not fighting, and no adult treated it seriously. However, it was totally a different story when someone got besieged by twenty people, even when all of them were merely children. Only the idiots would try to find trouble for themselves.

After taking care of Sai's disturbance, Shao Xuan gathered the ferocious kids back to the cave. With the chasing and fighting earlier, their unwilling emotions got vented all out. So naturally they should come back and do the right things.

Kids in the cave saw that Shao Xuan used his fish to trade for animal skins, so

they took their fish and ask Shao Xuan to do the trading for them. The group leaders that Shao Xuan appointed were not fools, and since they themselves did not like to communicate with other people in the tribe, they asked Shao Xuan to do the favor.

In the memories of some kids, they vaguely remembered that someone had taught them two things that should be prepared and stored before winter came. One was food, and the other was animal skins. The former one could save them from starvation, and the latter one guaranteed that they won't be frozen to death. Even though the tribe would spare them some animal skins for winter use, there were also kids that got ill because of the weather every year. Before they were properly treated, they tended to close their eyes for good and thus surrender their lives to the harsh winter. Those who had lived for a few years in the cave still had fresh memories of winter times. It was so terrifying, for no one had sufficient food, and at nights they often woke up because of the coldness. Let alone the fact that their companions could end up dead whenever. So since they had food now, they would gladly spare some food and trade for animal skins.

When one kid tried to ask Shao Xuan's favor, the other followed.

Shao Xuan recorded on the stone wall that which group had spared how many fish, and after he traded the animal skins back, he would distribute them to different groups accordingly.

As he was writing on the wall, someone came inside the cave.

Everyone hesitated and held their breath, seeing that someone walked in. Then every five of them gathered together and stared at the coming person vigilantly.

Shao Xuan knew the coming person, as he was just another kid living in the cave named Mo-Er. Mo-Er's father was an excellent warrior, but he had an accident during a hunting mission. After that, Mo-Er's mother remarried, and Mo-Er should've joined the new family according to the rules in the tribe. However, the newly formed family had more than one kid, and since there were inevitable conflicts, fighting and violence were unavoidable.

Originally Mo-Er was named as "Er", but since his father's name was "Mo", he

himself combined the two words and gave himself a new name.

Mo-Er carried a long stone knife that was nearly his height, and scanned around the cave. He sniffed and looked up curiously, only to find out that many fish with tiny sharp teeth were hanging above and stared at him with their dark red eyes.

Mo-Er suddenly stepped back, stiffened his body as he drew out the stone knife that he had tied on his back.

At the same time Mo-Er drew out his knife, some kids misunderstood him and thought that he was trying to rob away their fish, so they also stood up abruptly with tools tightly grasped in their hands, staring at Mo-Er with all their attention.

What? Want to rob our fish?!!

Although they lived in the same cave, ever since Shao Xuan had divided them into different groups of 5, in their hearts, anyone who did not belong to their group was considered as an outsider, against whom needed to be guarded.

“Alright! Drop all your knives and sticks... The one with the stone, don’t you dare think that I did not see the weapon in your hand behind your back! Drop them all!” Shao Xuan roared at all kids in the cave, and then walked towards Mo-Er. He pointed at the fish above and explained, “Dead.”

Mo-Er frowned and observed carefully at the fish with giant mouth and numerous sharp teeth. He held back his knife only after he made sure that they were dead fish with no ability to threaten his safety. It was also pretty hard for him to hold such a big knife. After he took it back, Mo-Er glanced at the surroundings again,

Seeing that, Shao Xuan assumed that he was looking for Ku, “Ku has gone to the mountainside district, and he won’t come back for the winter. Uncle Ge named me as the person in charge in the cave.”

Mo-Er nodded and said nothing. For him it didn’t matter who was in charge of the cave, it was just that the changes made him uncomfortable. Carrying his knife, Mo-Er headed to the depth of the cave. Unlike the old times, everyone in the cave stared at him as he walked, and sending a message that he was not

welcome. In the past, no one would care whether he returned or not, after some time's absence. They would just lie on the ground in a mess.

Just as Mo-Er wondered in private why these changes were happening since last time he left, the other kids were thinking as well. In the past they didn't bother to think, but now they were quite eager to think.

Another person meant that more game needed to be distributed, which was such a shame... Everyone had their own thoughts and spontaneously they glanced at Shao Xuan, waiting for his decision.

Shao Xuan had heard from Ku earlier, that Mo-Er's father had left him many good stuff. The stone knife that Mo-Er was using was inherited from his father. So compared to the other kids in the cave, Mo-Er was basically born with a silver spoon in his mouth. However, the second-generation-rich was unlike the others, as he would constantly come back to the cave, instead of living a fine life in the mountains. Sometimes, his remarried mother had to drag him away from the cave, and head back to their home in the mountain. However, after some time, Mo-Er would return to the cave again.

Perhaps he fought with the other kids in his new family, and perhaps for other reasons, he often came back. But no one asked him why, and Mo-Er had not told anyone about his life story. He was scanty with his words, and very reticent. When communicating with others, he would merely nod or shake his head, or else come directly to fight. He struck the other kids in the cave with only one impression – that he was quite a master in fighting. No one had beaten him up, including Ku, who had already gone to the mountainside district. So less than a last resort, no one in the cave would try to rob Mo-Er. Naturally one shall only rob things from the weakest person, and those with muddled brains that tried to rob Mo-Er, had all been stabbed by him.

“Are you staying in the cave for the winter?” asked Shao Xuan.

Mo-Er nodded.

“Good. Formerly there were twenty-five people in the cave, and I divided them into five groups. Now since you are back...”

The air was tense in the cave, and everyone stared at Shao Xuan with their eyes wide open. Some would even harshly shake their heads towards Shao Xuan, as if they were afraid that Shao Xuan would misinterpret their meaning, that they did not want any new members in their group.

“So you should join our group.” Said Shao Xuan.

Kids in the other four groups were quite relieved, and their intense expressions faded away, and were replaced with joyful smiles. As for the two older kids in Shao Xuan’s group, they were not happy about it, but since Shao Xuan had made the decision, they chose not to violate it. However, they glared at Mo-Er and turned around to continue weaving straw rope.

Mo-Er did not care for the others’ obvious exclusion, at least Shao Xuan could not see his resistance based on his reaction. He was still in deep silence as before.

At night, some kids already fell asleep, and some kids who were worried that tomorrow might be yet another bad day for fishing and couldn’t sleep, weaved straw ropes mindlessly. It was so messy, they would weave and then undo the straw rope again and again. When they got angry, they would use their teeth to bite the straw rope, which made Shao Xuan quite anxious. How are we going to use these crappy ropes that were already bitten through?

The fire near the entrance had not been put out, and the curtain at the entrance was still up. The fire light was pretty obvious since it was already dark in the outside. So the night swallows would avoid the bright places and only observe from afar.

Mo-Er carried his knife and approached the entrance. He put the giant knife on his back aside, and held two short knives with both his hands. He gripped the short knives backhanded, and since he could not hide his breath like totemic warriors, the flying night swallows noticed his presence as soon as he walked out the entrance.

Shao Xuan sat beside the fire. It was not far from the entrance, and the sky could be observed from there.

Two crescent moons were floating in the sky. Yes, two of them.

When seeing the moons in the sky at night, Shao Xuan realized this could only be explained by this being a whole other world, which was far different from the world he knew. All the rules and experiences he once mastered could not be applied in here.

During this season, two moons would march against each other in opposite directions. The crescents could not provide enough light to the dark sky, so it was darker than before.

The night grew darker and darker, and winter would officially begin when these two moons fully disappeared.

Shao Xuan's eyesight fell on Mo-Er's body as Mo-Er left the cave. Judging from his earlier behavior and the way he held those knives now, Shao Xuan could tell that Mo-Er was quite experienced in fighting. Every day when the other kids were sleeping, he would start to practice with his knives. Even though his father was gone, there was still someone who was willing to teach him.

Holding the short knives, Mo-Er stood there in silence, as if he was staring blankly at the darkness. But Shao Xuan knew that Mo-Er was waiting for the game to approach him.

In the darkness, night swallows flew by at a very fast speed. One could not see their bodies clearly and only slight sounds could be captured.

There were a lot of night swallows outside the cave, and they were hesitating because there was light coming from the cave. Only a few of them dared to rush at Mo-Er.

A quick small sound was heard. Night swallows were approaching!

Mo-Er moved fast and he slashed his short knife to the left rapidly!

It was a quick slash without hesitation.

Ding!

He missed.

The second that the knife cut on the wall, there was a flashing sparkle, because he was standing quite near the entrance.

The night swallow that attacked earlier had left, but it left a half-hand long

wound on Mo-Er's arm.

It was caused by the night swallow's shovel-like beak. But influenced by the coming knife, the night swallow slightly altered its attacking angle, so the wound it left on Mo-Er's arm was not deep. If the peck was in the front, Mo-Er would have lost some flesh, instead of just getting a superficial wound.

A fine hunter needed to know how to hide and how to endure. Mo-Er did not reveal any painful expressions at the wound earlier, and he did not frown even a bit. His hand holding the knife was still steady and he looked just the same as before. He did not treat his wound, and just let the blood bleed from his wound.

However, the flying night swallows seemed to sense the blood in the air, and began to act restless.

Shao Xuan could hear the sounds of more night swallows flying in the air.

Compared with the other kids in the cave, Mo-Er was much tougher. In the past, Ku was very incomprehensive towards Mo-Er using night swallows to practice his knife skills. In the eyes of the kids in the cave, he was totally asking for death himself. When Mo-Er was not in the cave, they whispered and wondered about why he would try so hard in such a tough place, when he could have a far better and easier life.

Caesar was also provoked by those flying night swallows outside the cave. Shao Xuan calmed him down and stood up to lead him to the depth of the cave.

However, just after a few steps, Shao Xuan stopped, for he heard some sharp humming.

At first Shao Xuan thought they were imaginary voices, and then he wondered if it was tinnitus caused by too much thinking or other reasons. But after a while, he felt that something was wrong. The sharp humming grew stronger and stronger, as if the thing who created the sound was approaching.

Ding!

Another sound caused by a stone knife and stone walls hitting, and at the same time, the sharp humming that Shao Xuan heard stopped.



Shao Xuan looked at the other side.

Mo-Er held a knife in his hand, and the knife had already poked through a night swallow's body. The night swallow finally rested after some waves of its wings, and its blood streamed down the gray stone knife.

The approaching night swallows turned and flew afar, as they were lingering in the air.

Mo-Er flung the knife and the dead night swallow was tossed into the cave beside the giant knife that Mo-Er carried in his back. Then he continued to wait for another game.

Caesar bared his teeth to that dead night swallow, and he was very anxious to take a bite at it. However, Shao Xuan stared at the shovel-like beak of that night swallow, lost in thought.

# Chapter 14 – Stoneware Crafter

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Early in the next morning, before the sun rose, all kids in the cave woke up, and some of them had dark circles around their eyes, for not getting proper sleep because of anxiety.

Mo-Er was curious when he got woken up, for that circumstance never happened in the past. He had killed a few night swallows during last night's practice, and on his arm there were also a few wounds with different depth. He had covered them with herbs.

Regardless of his curiosity, Mo-Er stood up and picked up his stone knife and waited for what was next. He found out that every five kids would stand close to each other, with straw ropes and little black things in their arms. They were discussing about something near the entrance as they constantly looked at Shao Xuan, fully excited.

"The sun rose! Today's weather must be good, so we can go fishing!" said a child, staring at the sun in the sky.

"But the weather was also good yesterday, yet we could not catch any fish! Will today be the same as yesterday?" Another child poured cold water on his enthusiasm.

Most kids in the cave were no fans of unlucky words like that, so they all glared at the one who had claimed "the same as yesterday".

Regardless of whether today was a day for fishing, they needed to eat breakfast, or else they would have no strength to work. Ever since they had some income, Shao Xuan would eat something every morning. At first, some

kids felt reluctant to eat, but then they behaved tired and cranky when it came to fishing, so their harvest was not as good as the others who had eaten. So the next morning, they would set up their stone pot, just as Shao Xuan did. They had no choice but to eat breakfast, for no eating meant no strength to work, and no strength to work meant even less game, which would lead to starvation. It was just a vicious cycle.

They were quite energetic when they were well fed and watered.

Seeing that Mo-Er did not have any trouble walking around, Shao Xuan invited him to go fishing together. Mo-Er offered the night swallows he killed last night as breakfast for the group, so the other kids besides Shao Xuan had also softened their attitude towards him.

All kids left the cave, leaving their home unguarded, because there was nothing left for others to steal. They carried all the straw ropes and black floats. As for fish, no one from the tribe would try to steal the food from the orphan cave, or else he or she would be truly despised. So no one would take their fish even if they put them outside to dry. Besides the food, there was nothing in the cave that could entice others. So it was totally unnecessary to keep it guarded, and Caesar followed Shao Xuan as well.

The surface of the river was also calm today, but not as weirdly calm as yesterday. Seeing the glittering waters, Shao Xuan felt relieved a little. He called for Ba and Tu to take up a straw rope with a stone worm tied on the end, and tossed it into the water as an experiment.

Over twenty kids were standing behind Shao Xuan and they stared at the stone worm without blinking. When the stone worm sank into the water, they stared at the black float on the surface.

“How’s it going, Ah-Xuan?”

“Is it okay?”

“Has the fish returned?”

Some hot-tempered kids couldn’t help but whisper.

Shao Xuan fixed his eyes on the surface, and this time he did not “see” those water creatures with the long tentacles. Also the black float’s vibration was just

like old times, which represented that stone worm was struggling down there.

“There should be no prob...” Before Shao Xuan could finish his words, he was interrupted by the situation on the water surface.

The black float sank suddenly and they could feel the familiar strength from the straw rope. Shao Xuan calmed his mind and promptly pulled the straw rope back together with Ba.

“Fish!”

“It’s fish!”

“The fish returned!!”

Seeing that, all kids jumped up and down in excitement, and when the familiar hideous face exposed itself from the water, the kids finally rested assured completely.

It was only one day, but they missed it dearly. They were quite eager with straw ropes at hand, and at Shao Xuan’s command, all the whelps began to fish expertly with their group members.

“Mo-Er, you stay with them. Tu, tell Mo-Er the things that he needs to know when fishing, while I take Caesar to dig out more stone worms. The stone worms we have now are far from enough. But remember, no should enter the water and no fighting. If you have the time to fight, you may as well pull out more fish. Take your time, for winter will come in a few days. Go seek help from the guarding warriors if anything’s wrong.” The latter part of Shao Xuan’s words were spoken to all the kids at the bank.

In fact, Shao Xuan didn’t need to say that much, for all the kids cherished today’s chance of fishing very much after yesterday’s incident. No one knew whether those fish would leave tomorrow, so the more they captured, the better. Who would bother to fight one another?

Just at the same time when the kids from the cave were pulling out fish from the water, some residents in mountain foot district also came and joined the army of fishers.

Those situations were seen often lately, and unlike old times, guarding warriors would not go and warn them if they saw someone go near the waters. Now they would only observe from afar, and from time to time they would remind them not to go down the water, and that they should report on time if they notice anything unusual.

These fish had indeed helped solve the pressing needs of some people. In a few families, the totemic warriors were wounded in recent hunting missions, so they could not participate in the last hunting before winter. No hunting led to less food. All family members shared the same trouble as how to survive the cold. However, now they were pretty relieved, for who could've anticipated that the things in the river could be captured so easily? Even the weak and the old people in the tribe could come and help.

Also, through all the things, Shao Xuan was gradually known by the residents in mountain foot district. In the past all they remembered was that a kid was wandering around with a wolf. Now because of fish, and their trade with him for black floats, they finally remembered Shao Xuan's name. When the word that Shao Xuan was planning to trade for all standards of animal skins got around, many families cleared out some spare animal skins that they wouldn't be using, and rushed to do trading with Shao Xuan.

When Shao Xuan arrived at the gravel yard, there were already seven or eight people there. They even greeted Shao Xuan, and after they heard that today was a day for fishing, their eyesight on him grew much warmer. How they wished that they could find the stone worms' hideout, and take them all as fishing baits as soon as possible.

Recently, the stone worms in the gravel yard were all in trouble. As soon as they revealed their head a little from the gravels, people would rush forward and dig them out. The quick ones could cut itself into half to survive, and the slow ones could only be dragged out as a whole. In the previous years, they would get no one's attention even if they crept above the ground slowly. However, now it was totally different. Aside from revealing their heads, even a slight move of gravels would draw someone's attention, and people would turn the gravels over to see if there are any stone worms hidden inside.

But, compared with Caesar, these people were far from efficient. He was very

coveted when people in the gravel yard searching for stone worms saw that Caesar could easily dig one out with a bit of sniffing.

This wolf had such a fucking sharp nose!

Also, one would think that perhaps they could weave a giant net with the straw ropes, and use that to capture the fish. However, the truth proved different. Indeed, one could capture many fish with a net, but before the net was pulled up, it was torn apart by those fish. And there was no fish left when one collected the net back. Thus everyone had no alternative but to use the inconvenient way to go fishing, and capture their game one at a time.

In the afternoon, all the kids were summoned back in their cave by Shao Xuan. After they had been fed with the food provided by the tribe, no one wanted to stay in the cave to weave straw ropes. Because after yesterday's hard work, they now had enough straw ropes. Instead, they wanted to go back to the riverside and continue fishing before it got dark.

Shao Xuan raised no objection, but he did not tag along in the afternoon. He got plenty of stone worms in the morning so it should be enough for five groups.

Judging from the moons last night, winter should be just around the corner. They have to capture more fish before winter comes, for as long as winter came, the temperature in the outside would rapidly drop and there would be thick ice along the bank. And then, people with no totemic power would basically always stay inside. They had no strong or thick animal fur clothes to fight against the blizzard, so they could easily get frozen to death.

Instead of following those kids to the riverbank, Shao Xuan took two fish and left the cave. Shao Xuan dragged one fish and gave the other fish to Caesar. He also took an animal skin bag with him, in which there were the stones of fine quality that he had collected from the training ground earlier. Since there were more people searching for stone worms in the gravel yard, it was not safe as a hiding place anymore. Shao Xuan moved those stones and kept them in the cave. Unlike old times, no whelp dared to rob Shao Xuan's stuff anymore.

Every time when Shao Xuan had found fine stones that could be made into tools, he would trade them for food with a stoneware crafter. Also, the man he

chose to do trading with was also fixed. Shao Xuan made the decision after he had observed a few stoneware crafters in the mountain foot district.

The stoneware crafter was named “Ke”. People said that he was in charge of placing traps back in the hunting team. It’s just that during a hunting mission, he lost one of his legs, so he had to retire from the hunting team and become a stoneware crafter near the mountain foot district. And now he made stoneware for people to earn a living.

Shao Xuan took the fish and came in front of a wooden house. There were no doors in many houses, as people used thick leather curtains or plant-woven curtains to block others’ views. It was also the case with Ke’s house. Shao Xuan called out, “Uncle Ke!”, as he could hear sounds of polishing the stoneware in the house.

No one answered inside, but the leather curtain moved a little bit, which meant that the owner allowed you to come inside. Without permission to enter, Shao Xuan would never be able to lift the curtain. Many things that Ke used seemed quite simple, but were in fact very much complicated than the things in other residents’ houses. You can directly lift other people’s curtains, but it won’t work in Ke’s house. You would definitely be the one who suffered, if you tried to enter by force.

Even though he had only one leg left now, Ke was in charge of placing traps back in the hunting team. So for what it was worth, he still had his skills.

# Chapter 15 – He's always up to something, just like you

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan lifted the curtain and walked inside, followed by Caesar. However, Caesar dared not relax or bump into anything.

Last time when he sniffed on something, that he was curious about, he got clamped on his nose once he accidentally touched it. Even with all his efforts, he could not tear it off with his paws, instead, the more he struggled, the tighter the clamp became.

Even though Shao Xuan came to his rescue soon and helped him remove the clamp, it hurt like hell for days. Ever since then, Caesar would always behave well when he followed Shao Xuan in here. And he would only stay with Shao Xuan with no extra curiosity.

Ke's house was relatively larger than the others' and was around a hundred square meters. In the room there were different kinds of stoneware, from daily-use stone cups and bowls, to hunting tools such as stone knives and spearheads. Also the tools were in different materials. Some of them were made from buckhorns or animal bones, and some were made from ordinary stones only. However, most of the tools were combinations of the former two materials, as composite type tools. The warriors in the tribe used mostly the composite type ones.

After glancing at the tools hanging on the wall, Shao Xuan looked away and went straight into the small room that Ke used to polish his stoneware.

Gray haired old Ke sat there still. Because he dealt with stones all day long, so



all his animal skin clothes were covered with a layer of white stone powder. His hands, that he was using to hold the stoneware, now were stained with a layer of gray.

Ke fixed his eyes on the stoneware which he was still working on, and did not move his eyesight because of Shao Xuan's entry, as if the whole world had disappeared besides the stoneware in his hands.

Knowing Ke's character, Shao Xuan directly took out his animal skin bag and fetched those two stones as he handed them to Ke.

"Uncle Ke, could you please help me make two stone knives or daggers?"

The stones Shao Xuan took out could merely be made into short knives or daggers because of their limited length.

Ke stopped what he was working on and raised his head to take a look at the stones Shao Xuan passed on to him. Then he glimpsed at the two fish Shao Xuan brought and said, "Yes, one fish." He meant that he could make the daggers for him and it would cost him only one fish.

"You must keep those two. The other one is my gift, in order to express our gratitude to your kindness for the past six months!"

Every time when Shao Xuan collected the stones, he would bring them to Ke's place and do the trading. At first Shao Xuan was unfamiliar with all this stuff and he had brought Ke some not-so-fine stones, but still, Ke gave him food anyway. Later on Shao Xuan knew how to identify stones of different levels, so then he recalled and realized about Ke's intention to help, because how could someone deal with stones and stoneware everyday and not know the difference between fine stones and normal stones?

Although Ke was a man who always wore a straight face, giving others a sense of alienation, he did help Shao Xuan a lot. What's more, Shao Xuan had seen Ge, who was in charge of food delivery, come to visit Ke the other day, and the way they talked obviously indicated that they were pretty close to each other. So Shao Xuan guessed that perhaps this stoneware crafter was the true reason that Ge put Shao Xuan in charge of the orphan cave after Ku had left.

Ke frowned and before he could talk, Shao Xuan pulled out a small stone knife

and handed to Ke, “Uncle Ke, please take a look at this stone knife that I myself made the other day.”

The stone Shao Xuan used to make this stone knife was not of good quality. In the eyes of a stoneware craftsman, perhaps it could merely be considered as an inferior one, barely better than those stones in the gravel yard. Surely it was not difficult to polish or craft, and Shao Xuan spent three days working on it.

Ke took over the stone knife and looked at it, as he brushed the knife with his fingers covered by stone powders. At last, he pointed at the spot about one-third away from the handle, and said, “This part is no good.”

Shao Xuan knew that experienced stoneware crafters could tell the strengths and weaknesses with one simple glimpse. And Ke was just pointing out and informing Shao Xuan, about the biggest problem about his knife.

Why should he only mention the biggest problem?

Shao Xuan was after all only a beginner when it came to stoneware crafting, and he could only rely on his imagination and thoughts. Shao Xuan had no idea of any crafting skills that stoneware crafters held dear. So naturally the stone knife was just something with numerous flaws. So that point was only counted as the biggest problem.

The more Shao Xuan communicated with people in the tribe, the deeper understanding he got about the tribe. No one should underestimate their wisdom and ability. Shao Xuan wanted to learn some skills in crafting and polishing stoneware from Ke by taking out that stone knife.

That stone knife was only made with a knife shape, and usually Shao Xuan could use it for normal occasions. But surely it differed a lot with the knives that hunting warriors used. In the eyes of Ke as a stoneware crafter, it was full of flaws. He could tell which part was easy to break, and which part was over-polished, and which part was not polished enough, with only one glance.

Judging from Ke’s expression earlier when he saw the stone knife, Shao Xuan realized that it was far from satisfaction. Basing on the fact that Shao Xuan was merely a child with no experience in crafting stoneware, Ke made a comment on his work. If other warriors came and gave Ke such a stone knife, Ke would have just tossed it away and simply ignored it.

“Uncle Ke, can I learn how to craft stoneware from you?” asked Shao Xuan. Now, he had plenty of time and with the coming winter, he would stay inside the cave and practice on crafting stones. He got all the stone materials for himself anyway.

However unfortunately, Ke shook his head at Shao Xuan’s proposal, “Not now. After you have awakened your totemic power, then we can talk.”

Why should someone have the totemic power if he wanted to craft and polish a stone? What for?

Regardless of the curiosity, Shao Xuan did not continue to ask. Seeing Ke’s reaction he knew that Ke did not want to explain.

Since Ke was refusing, naturally he had his reasons, but...

Shao Xuan did some calculation. After this coming winter, he would be ten years old. Based on other kids’ former experiences, someone could awaken his totemic power at the age of eleven or twelve. So he should wait for at least one or two years. And the slow kids like Ku, would only awaken their totemic power until they turned thirteen or fourteen years old.

So there was still a lot of time to wait, if you thought about it that way.

Even if he could not learn the skills now, he could always watch. So Shao Xuan squatted down there, watching Ke craft and polish.

Bystanders would assume it was very simple but only after they truly got started on it, could they realize that it was completely different from what they imagined before. Seeing Ke’s short knife and then glimpsing at the short knife he made... Ah, only comparing could show the truth. Aside from different stone materials, one could tell which one was better based on their outlook. No wonder when Ke was looking at the stone knife Shao Xuan made, he showed a tolerant look. Perhaps in his heart he had criticized a lot, but he kept all his criticism to himself since Shao Xuan was only a kid.

When the night fell, Shao Xuan stopped watching and helped Ke set up a stone pot with fires underneath. Also, he chopped the fish before he took his leave, and then he returned to the cave with Caesar.

Soon after Shao Xuan left, Ke placed the completed stoneware into a box, and wiped his hand, preparing to cook the food. The water in that stone pot was already boiled, and at the time when he was placing fish chops into the pot, there was a slight noise coming from the window behind. Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh! Then there came the sound of arrows.

“Ah!”

Dong!

The person coming from the window fell on the ground.

Ke did not lift his head, while he stirred the soup in the stone pot with a spoon.

“Hey, Ke! Why did you change your tricks again? Huff...” one-armed Ge rubbed his butt as he complained. Earlier he hit the ground with his butt first, so he fell. Between his feet there was a leather rope tightly strapped, or else he would not have fallen so easily from just entering through a window. He lost an arm, not a leg, so under normal circumstances, how could he fall?

As he continued with his cursing, Ke continued stirring the soup in his stone pot, inattentive to Ge, who just climbed through his window and kept complaining.

Ge went through some troubles untying the leather rope, and he sniffed as he approached the stone pot, “Fish soup?”

Looking around the room, he saw the fish in the corner. Ge smiled, “Has that lad come already?”

“...” Ke remained silent.

“Ah-Xuan traded for a big bag of salt with me yesterday, with his fish. I think he’s really up to something. Today I went to the cave, and guess what? You have no idea how many fish they had stored on the top of the cave. They will have a nice winter this year, all those whelps. No wonder why you recommended Ah-Xuan as replacement for Ku. As you predicted, not before long, the situation in that cave has changed a lot! Now half of the salt I have would go to Ah-Xuan through trading.” Ge gasped in admiration.

In the mountains where the tribe was located, there was a natural-formed salt pond, which provided all the salt for the tribe. However, there were strict rules about the usage of salt, and a certain amount of salt would be given to each family, to meet their basic daily needs. One had to trade for more salt with his own things if he wanted more. Don't ever think about stealing, for there were warriors guarding everywhere near the salt pond. People from the mountaintop district would be in charge of the distribution of salt, so whoever wanted to trade for more salt, needed to talk to the people living above. However, Ge was in charge of food, so he could save more salt than others. So Shao Xuan would take the fish and do trading directly with Ge.

Seeing that Ke remained silent, Ge found a stone stool and sat down as he kept talking himself, "The day before yesterday, I saw that boy crafting and polishing a stone knife, so I suppose that he wanted your comment on that, right? That was why he came, right?" Before Ke could answer, Ge continued, "In fact, that lad seems to be a nice person, and he is eager to learn using his smart head. I can tell that he is always up to something, just like you. He's suitable for doing your job. Since he approached you and had enough integrity and sincerity, why not take him in as an apprentice?"

Ge kicked his legs in the air, as he glimpsed at the chopped fish on the table. Also, he noticed the stone pot which was already set up. It was not the same way as Ke used to set up the stone pot, and obviously someone did that job for him. It was less steady, and perhaps it was also the lad's work.

Ke shook his head and finally said, "He will get hurt easily."

"Indeed. Without totemic power, it would be severe if he had an accident. After all, what you've been dealing with is quite... dangerous."

Ge pulled out an arrow from his armpit, as it was stabbed into his animal skin clothes. A few minutes before, when he entered through the window, he only paid attention to those coming arrows, but ignored the leather rope near the window frame, so he got pinned down like that.

It was just a small wooden arrow, and could easily be broken by a finger snap. But earlier, it stabbed into his animal skin clothes in the blink of an eye.

Obviously it was at a very high speed.

Ge played with the half-hand long arrow in between his fingers for a while, and then he gently flicked his fingers, and the wooden arrow flew straight through the narrow-mouth of the wooden barrel hanging in a corner.

He was not sure where those small arrows come from, so he could only place them in the wooden barrel for now. Actually, the barrel was filled with things that he tossed into. When it became full, Ke would empty it and replace all the items inside properly.

“Ke, you will have to wait for a while. Based on the physique of the kids from that cave, you will have to wait for at least two more years.” Sighed Ge.

# Chapter 16 – Winter is coming

---

Translated by Sunyancai

When Shao Xuan came back, all the kids had already returned to the cave from the riverbank. Judging from their unrestrainable smiles, they had a great harvest today. Two groups even competed to see who pulled back more fish.

“Ah-Xuan, earlier someone came to trade things with you. You weren’t here, so they said they’ll come by tomorrow.” Tu said as he sat there, weaving a straw rope.

Formerly Tu was just a timid little boy in the cave. He was relatively weak and thin. But after this period of time, he turned more cheerful than before, and more communicative.

“Okay, I got it.” Shao Xuan nodded.

Probably someone in the tribe attempted to go fishing, and perhaps they were here for Shao Xuan after they failed for a few times and finally realized the use and importance of the black floats.

At night, the moons hanging on both sides of the sky grew darker. The crescent moons were thin, and one could barely see their not-so-bright radians. If you looked through the vent, you would find the sky filled with darkness, and only the sound of wind and flying night swallows could be heard. Winter was coming and even night swallows had lost their spirits. They created much louder sounds than before because they could not try too much to hide their tracks.

A few days after that, both, kids in the cave and residents in the mountain foot district, would rush to go to the riverside before sunset. They all wanted to

pull out more fish before the water froze.

Perhaps in the past few years, people in the tribe had never thought about capturing those fish, so there were so many fish in the river, that even many people here pulling out fish every day did not cause its quantity to drop. Those fish were extremely ferocious but were stupid at the same time. So they took the bait easily and one could get more fish every day as long as they mastered the tricks in fishing.

Fortunately, the fishing went pretty well for days, and those odd creatures with long tentacles never showed up again.

Until one morning, Shao Xuan noticed that there were fewer stone worms when he took Caesar to the gravel yard. For the whole morning they only got three stone worms.

Also, out of blue the fish seemed to disappear in the river. After they tossed the bait, they waited for a long time before they dragged out a mid-sized fish.

The situation seemed to be a sign to both the kids in the cave, and other people in the tribe.

“Ah-Xuan, why is this happening?” All kids in the cave were quite upset, and they behaved like heart-broken fellows as they stared at the straw ropes in their hands.

“Because winter is coming.” Said ~~Ned Stark~~ an elder kid. He had heard from others that when winter came, many game would hide itself and no one could ever find them before winter was over, and they would only show up again afterwards. Just because of that, people in the tribe were no fans of winter, for winter was full of different kinds of obstacles and that led to deep depression.

Seeing that the other kids were still staring at him, Shao Xuan sighed, “Indeed, perhaps that’s the reason. Because in wintertime, stone worms would not appear on the surface, as they chose to stay deep down underneath to survive the cold. Deep down in the ground, it is much warmer than on the surface. While, the piranhas near riversides would also swim to the deeper section of the river and leave the shallows, because the water near the bank would freeze during wintertime. So, we can’t catch stone worms and we can hardly capture any fish as well.”



Just as Shao Xuan finished his words, the cave suddenly got filled with a gloomy atmosphere of depression.

In the memories of many kids in the cave, winter was cold and dark. Sometimes they didn't realize that they were ill because of their drowsiness. They would just keep sleeping like whelps. When it was time for food, they would be woken up by people and got to fill something into their bellies, and then fall asleep again. They had no sense of time and they spent their lives like walking corpses. In the past that was the normal case, but compared with the days they spent on fishing and working, how could they feel the same when they recalled the dark times?

Also, some kid was sitting in the corner with the fish he dragged back this afternoon, feeling distressed. As he felt sorry for himself, he touched the fish's head over and over, coveting the good times. However, it was a pretty weird picture that one little kid would just sit there, with the dead fish's wide open red eyes and mouthful of tiny sharp teeth. If he was put in the time of peace just as Shao Xuan's last life's world, he would totally be labeled as a psychopath, or some person with a twisted mind. But in here, that was hundred percent normal.

Shao Xuan wiped his face and he moved his eyesight, no longer looking at that sad boy with a fish in his arms.

In fact, Shao Xuan had aired all the hay that they used for sleeping these days. Also, he had prepared and sorted out all the animal skins and furs. So the preparation was sufficient, but it was just that no one would be able to eliminate the shadows caused by the coming winter. The past experience had caused such deep impressions in the minds of kids in the cave, so they still couldn't be optimistic.

It was just noon, but it grew darker outside.

Just as Shao Xuan was making plans for winter, Ba got up from his sitting place and walked towards him.

"Ah-Xuan... I...I want...want to..."

Ba used a lot of time and efforts to make himself clear.

Actually, Ba had a younger sister, and at the same time Ba was sent to the orphan cave, his younger sister got adopted by a family in the mountainside district. People in the tribe valued girls over boys, and only those families which adopted girls could get subsidy from the tribe.

Most people in the tribe would have their totemic power awakened. Normally boys could awaken their totemic power at the age of ten to fifteen, sooner or later. That was also the reason why all those kids, no matter in the cave or in the mountain foot district, dared to live a simple life filled with sleeping and eating. None of them cared about anything else, because they did not need to work hard. As long as they managed to survive from illness and starvation, they would naturally become totemic warrior when the age came.

Compared to boys, fewer girls would awaken their totemic power, and nearly one third of the girls could not awaken their totemic power in their whole lives. However, the tribe did not treat them badly because of that. Instead, girls were being treated far better than boys. So even being an orphan girl, she would be more easily adopted by some families. And because of the above mentioned reason, no girl lived in the orphan cave and all kids living in there were boys.

Ba wanted to visit his younger sister before winter and give her a fish as a gift. He would spare the fish from his own share, but still he came to ask for Shao Xuan's opinion. Since Shao Xuan showed the kids in orphan cave how to fish, he was highly respected in the cave and no one could be comparable to his position. For something that Shao Xuan permitted to do, even those two oldest kids wouldn't come to object even when sometimes they were not quite pleased. Now, they would also consult for Shao Xuan's opinions if they had something in mind.

Ba expressed his idea with stutter and then he just stood there, rubbing his fingers with anxiety. He was worried that Shao Xuan would refuse him so he looked at him cautiously.

"Sure you can do that. Just remember to come back before night." Said Shao Xuan.

"Thank you so much, Ah-Xuan!" Ba excitedly ran backwards and he rushed

out of the cave with one fish.

Seeing Ba leaving with a fish cheerfully, Shao Xuan smiled, “He did not stammer even a little when he said thank you. So it seems he needs to have some stimulation, and perhaps someday, he would be cured when he got really excited.”

Not long after Ba left, Mo-Er’s mother came. She had the same reason for coming, which was to take her son home, back in the mountain. However, Mo-Er was not willing to go with her, even after she had tried every method to persuade him. Perhaps he had a huge fight with the other kids in his new family when he lived back in the mountain.

In the end, Mo-Er’s mother left in tears but she left him a thick coat made from animal fur, and some meat jerky.

In the afternoon, when Ge was delivering food, he also brought Shao Xuan some meat jerky, an animal skin blanket and a piece of cloth.

“This is from Mai, and the clothes are from Lang Ga.” Said Ge, “They are pretty busy today, because the Shaman said winter would come tomorrow. Everyone is busy checking on houses and preparing stuff. So they asked me to help deliver their things to you.”

Mai’s hunting team returned yesterday, and they hurriedly finished their last hunting mission of the year before wintertime. The harvest was good, and Shao Xuan had seen the game they had dragged back. He was positive that the food was sufficient enough and could totally guarantee a nice winter. Let alone that many people from the hunting team had some food stored back at home, so they wouldn’t suffer from starvation during winter. Yesterday, every hunting warrior that returned had a satisfying and relaxed smile on his face.

Shao Xuan took it all and had a satisfied look at them. The meat jerky was fresh and of good quality. The animal skin blanket and clothes were also far better than the animal furs and skins he traded for these days.

It was impossible to say that he was not touched by this kind gesture.

“Thank you, Uncle Ge! Also please kindly forward my thanks to Uncle Mai and Lang Ga. Oh, yes...”

Shao Xuan dragged two fish over, and asked Ge to pass them on to Mai and Lang Ga. Even though he knew that Mai's game from the hunting mission was sufficient for him to go through the winter, he still needed to show his gratitude. Those two fish were from Shao Xuan's own share, so naturally others in his group would not have a problem with it.

"Hey, aren't you afraid that I will keep the fish to myself?" Ge tossed the fish into the empty stone crock and he left, with one arm carrying the stone crock.

Since the Shaman had predicted that tomorrow would be wintertime, Shao Xuan passed on the words to the others in the cave. All the furs and animal skins had been distributed, and he needed to say no more. Everyone knew how to protect themselves.

That night, the sky was totally dark. Up till a few days earlier, two crescent moons could be observed, but tonight, they disappeared.

The darkness looked depressing.

Shao Xuan woke up because of the coldness in the middle of the night, and he felt as if he was lying in the snow, shaking like devils. However, he felt less cold when he woke up, which was odd.

Shao Xuan pulled away some of the straws blocking the vent after he sat up. And instantly he got chilled by the icy wind that blew in.

Winter has officially come.

Winter's arrival made the life in the cave return to what it was long time ago; besides eating, they would only sleep. The temperature outside was very low, and they could not do anything anyway, so they had to go back to sleep, with an expectation that winter would be over the next time they woke up.

With enough food and thicker animal skin blankets they put on, they had a comfortable sleep. At least more comfortable and relaxed than that from their memories.

During wintertime, Ge came by everyday delivering food as usual, regardless of the heavy blizzards outside. Shao Xuan felt that Ge did not have to go through so much trouble. So during discussions, Shao Xuan proposed Ge to come and deliver food every three days, and he would bring three days' food at

a time. Anyways, there was less mess and chaos in the cave, and Ge knew that Shao Xuan could keep the situation in the cave under control. So he raised no objection, and he even left Shao Xuan a lighting stone spoon and some lighting powders, so that Shao Xuan could make a fire on his own.

However, in wintertime they did have something else to do. For example, someone would be sent here to teach them numbers and letters from the tribe. Like old times, the teacher would come here every twenty or thirty days. This winter was no exception.

A certain day, it was when the teacher came by. The day before, Ge had shared the news with Shao Xuan, and let him prepare ahead, or else they would miss the precious learning opportunity just because they slept over the day.

So, when the old hunter in animal skin clothes lifted the curtain while trembling, and went inside the cave, before he felt the warmth of the fire inside, he was very surprised to see all the kids who were supposed to be sleeping on the ground, sitting there spiritually with sparkling eyes staring at him.

He lived up in the mountain, and earlier he was held up for something, so if calculated correctly, he hadn't been here in nearly forty days, so he barely knew what had happened down here. Yesterday he had consulted Ge about the situation in the cave. At first it was routine questions, but unexpectedly things had changed a lot within recent days.

When he heard that Ge appointed Shao Xuan, a less than ten years old boy, in charge of the cave, the old hunter was quite displeased. He assumed that it was totally a bullying decision. Were the kids easy to deal with? In the past when he went to teach them, Shao Xuan was the only one that paid attention. So the old hunter had a nice memory about him.

He did not believe him when Ge explained, but seeing the situation in the cave for himself, he kind of believed what Ge said and it really seemed to be different.

Under two dozen kids' quite excited and eager eyes, the old hunter went inside with stiff strides, and sat on the stone bench he used to sit on. He took out a piece of animal skin with numbers on it, and took a look at it closely by

the fire. He cleared his throat after he made sure that it was the correct roll of animal skin.

“Ahem. Well, today, I plan to teach you numbers and how to count from one to ten. Listen up closely. I will say it first. Ahem. One, two, three, ...”

After he had gone through it from one to ten, the old hunter felt that the atmosphere turned weird. He moved his sight from the animal skin roll and looked up, only to find out that the earlier eager eyes became impatient. And some of those were even full of despise obviously.

What? It was just the beginning and they were already bored? The old hunter was displeased and it reminded him of the old times when he came to teach them. They wanted to go back to sleep with endless yawns even when he just began to teach them.

As he was about to yell at them, the old hunter heard a boy complaining, “So I’m listening to this crap during wintertime, and that is why I give up on my sleep?”

“Only from one to ten? This old man is useless.”

“Exactly!”

“Hey, can you teach or not? Or is it that you can only count from one to ten?”

“Ah-Xuan, perhaps we should ask the old man to leave, and let others come and teach us.”

“Yes, I agree!”

“Change the teacher!”

“Change the teacher!”

“Make him go!”

Shao Xuan glimpsed at the old man holding a roll of animal skin, and he noticed that his veins were clearly throbbing on his forehead.

**Note:**

- Sorry, the real title is: **Winter Came**, I just couldn't help my self.
- Also, previously we used "leash a lot, but we will be changing it to rope from henceforth, it was used as a leash in the first instance and then we kept it as that, but it kept coming, even where it was clearly a rope. We will change it in the previous instances.

# Chapter 17 – Fresco

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Since he was able to come over and be responsible for the teaching, naturally he was not some idiot who only knew how to count from one to ten at his age. What's more, some old hunters like himself were all experts in counting, even though they perhaps did not know much about other fields. It was because counting was one of the basic skills required for a hunting mission, and the competition among different hunting teams also required that one knew how to count.

Knowing that the children in the cave could skillfully count from one to thirty, the old hunter felt quite happy and content, aside from being surprised and shocked. He liked to teach others, but unfortunately up on the mountain, no kid needed him to teach.

With this rare and precious interest, the old hunter paid extra attention in teaching and he enjoyed it as well.

Since they could learn more numbers, the cave quieted down and they stopped talking about changing the teacher, instead every whelp was listening closely with full attention. Shao Xuan mainly focused on the letters in the tribe, while other kids were eager to learn more numbers. Caesar, who was lying on the straw bed, sleeping, was the most bored one in the cave.

When it was the time for the old hunter to leave, he became quite attached to those kids already, and he felt like that he had more things that he wanted to share. In the past, he would only come here two or three times. Now that the situation had changed and he enjoyed teaching them, he planned to visit a few more times, for after all, he was not capable of getting down the mountain



every day. After serious consideration, the old hunter left a roll of animal skin. Not that first one he had taken out, but a larger one with more letters and more numbers written on it. He asked Shao Xuan to keep it and whoever wanted to read may go to Shao Xuan.

All the vents in the cave were already blocked up by straw, so no light could come inside. During wintertime, it was the same darkness in the cave no matter day or night. Also they could not afford to keep the fire all day long. The firewood stored in the cave was brought by the warriors, but still, they could not afford to keep the fire going all day.

Shao Xuan stared at the fire and thought that it would be much more convenient for everyone, if the cave could be brighter inside.

Caesar was eating a raw fish beside Shao Xuan as he did not like cooked food.

The fish-teeth left after they had eaten the meat were not suitable for making other tools. They were too small. And because they were too young to go out for hunting, the fish teeth could not be used as hunting tools. But still, Shao Xuan made a few brushes with those teeth, to comb Caesar's fur and his own hair.

There were combs in the tribe, but kids in the orphan cave had no interest in combing. Appearances were never as important as issues related to food. All men and women in the tribe had different hairstyles, long or short. Those with no favor of long hair may use a stone knife to cut their hair short. But no one cared to cut hair for the kids in the cave, so all of them had long messy hair.

Those relatively larger fish-teeth were carved up and made into necklaces by kids. They loved it.

Decorations made with the game's horns or teeth, or anything representative were symbols of ability. And people in the tribe liked to use that to show off their hunting gains. Some warriors would give those kind of decorations to their beloved girls to earn their favors. Girls and women in the tribe would also compare these items, to see whose necklace was more advanced; and whose feathers on the head was from a more ferocious bird. The fiercer the game was, the more admiration one would receive by putting on decorations made from it.

Of course, kids would also compare themselves with others. In the mountain foot district, most kids were wearing necklaces that were made from the horns, teeth, or bones of their parents' game. In the cave, however, many orphans lost their parents at a very young age, so no one would give them such decorations as gifts. Every time when they went to the tribe and saw those kids with decorations, they would very much admire or even envy them. It was also the hidden reason for most fights between them and the other kids in the tribe.

But now, they could use their own game's teeth to make their own unique necklaces. How could they not be happy? Now they also had necklaces, which were no worse than the other kids'! Fish-teeth necklaces were another reason why those kids were so fond of fish.

Shao Xuan did not strive for fish-teeth with the others, and he spared all those big fish teeth, which were suitable to make necklaces, to other kids. When Ba was visiting his younger sister, he gave her a big fish tooth, even bigger than the ones he was wearing himself.

Life was not easy on anyone.

As Shao Xuan was considering how to better the situation in the cave, other kids were far less troubled. Aside from sleeping every day, they would only communicate about counting numbers by the fire with other kids when it was time to eat. While Mo-Er sharpened his knife every day. He had already mastered counting, and he had known more letters than the others in the cave. So every time when the fire was lit, he would stay in a corner and practice his knifing skills. He would toss a rock into the air, and then use his knife to chop at it, since in the cave there were no night swallows for him to practice.

After eating, all the kids in the cave fell asleep. Before the wood in the bonfire burnt out, Shao Xuan added another stick in until the end of the stick caught on fire, taking the burning stick as a torch and walked deeper into the cave.

The other day when he was checking out the depth of the cave, he found a stone room that stored sundries. The stone pots that the kids used to make breakfast just came from there after Shao Xuan dug them out. Besides stone pots, Shao Xuan did not pay attention to other items. Anyway he had nothing else to do, so he carried the stick there to see if he could find any other useful

things.

Even though they had blocked all vents where they slept, down the cave there were still cracks connecting to the outside. So Shao Xuan could feel icy breezes blowing in as he kept waking inside.

The good thing was that the wind was not strong and the flame merely flickered a few times and was not blown out.

Shao Xuan tightened his animal skin clothes, and followed his memories inside. Caesar followed him closely.

There were many stone rooms inside, and they were distributed like branches. The first room from the right had sundries in it, and was quite big.

The vent in the stone room was also blocked, and Shao Xuan took the torch to go through the stuff inside. Some items were used before, but perhaps the kids in the cave no longer cared to use them and only waited for the tribe to deliver food, so none of the tools were used again and they could only gather dust there.

Aside from some stone stools and things to set up stone pots, Shao Xuan had no interest in the other items.

After some time, Shao Xuan fixed his eyes on the round stone plate. It was a round stone plate, quite flat, with an edge about one finger above the bottom.

To hold food to eat? But who would use this thing since they had a stone pot?

He put the stone plate aside and kept on looking for other items. As he kept digging, he hesitated for a minute and looked back at the stone plate that he tossed to the side. He measured roughly with his hand and then raised the torch high to see the vent.

All the vents in the cave were not small, so air and light could both come inside.

Shao Xuan's sight moved back and forth between the blocked vent and the stone plate, and then he took the stone plate as he returned along the way he came.

Shao Xuan added some more firewood to make the fire grow, and got some snow from the thick layer of snow at the entrance. He placed the snow inside a stone pot, and placed the stone plate outside the straw curtain by the cave's entrance. After some time, he poured the melted snow water inside the stone plate, and after not long, he found the water had frozen.

So he dragged the stone plate inside, and burned on the edge of the stone plate with fire, before he put the stone plate upside down and pulled out the round ice.

Some kids who weren't asleep yet were staring at Shao Xuan's efforts curiously. They wondered what he was doing, but wrapped with thick animal skin blankets, they did not want to stand up because of the cold, yet could only try to crane their necks to get a clearer view. However, the fire was not strong enough for them to see clearly.

It was too cold to touch with bare hands, so Shao Xuan used a piece of animal skin to wrap the ice, and he stepped on a rock, holding the ice. He told Ba to clear out all the straw that were blocking the vent.

With no stuffing, icy winds blew into the cave, and kids inside got chilled because of the cold. Shao Xuan, who was standing right under the vent got an intense strike and he could not even feel his own face. So he hurriedly pushed the ice towards the vent, with the help of Ba.

As Shao Xuan had predicted earlier, the ice was almost the same size as the vent, only smaller. And that difference allowed him to push the ice into that vent.

In the past, Shao Xuan did not understand why there was a dent at the edge of the vent. Now he understood that it was used to block the ice. As for the other small crevices, they could be blocked by straw directly.

By the time the ice was stuck, no icy winds could blow in but light poured down through the ice. During winter there was no shining sunshine, but daylight was not gone.

In Shao Xuan's perspective, he was not satisfied with that little light, and the design was not flawless. But for those kids in the cave, they were more than satisfied.

All of them kept their mouths wide open as they stared at the sparkling vent, like mindless fools.

It turned out that winter could also be bright.

Shao Xuan had only completed the refitting of one vent, and the other kids volunteered to finish the others. This time there were plenty of volunteers. Those who cared not to get up earlier, now gathered together with animal skin blankets.

Shao Xuan guided them to make an ice plate and installed it into one vent, then he let them continue working by themselves. Every kid wanted to try with their own hands, but Shao Xuan decided that they should also do the job as a five-member group. They used a human pyramid to get to those really high places.

Shao Xuan told them to be careful when they used the stone plate, for no one knew how long it had been stored here. At least in recent years, it had never been used.

Seeing that there should be no problem, Shao Xuan carried his torch and went back to the stone room full of sundries. He dug out another four stone plates, but three were broken and only one could be used.

He took the second stone plate out and made an ice bulk that blocked the vent in this sundries' stone room. He could now lose his torch, yet still see the situation inside.

While the kids were busy making ice plates, Shao Xuan stayed there to keep digging for other items that they could use.

As he was digging, Shao Xuan's arm swiped past the stone walls, and he noticed that stone powders fell from it.

Shao Xuan was quite curious, for other stone walls in the cave were not like that. He bent and observed closely, and then found out that it seemed that on the stone walls in the stone room, there was a layer. It seemed to be painted with special stone powders.

He had seen people in the tribe use similar ways to paint wood to prevent the wood from being infected by insects. But it was in the cave, why would anyone

use this method to paint a stone wall? And, judging by the situation, it was painted years ago in ancient times.

If newly painted, the powders should cover the wall fully and tightly. However, now since it had been a long time since everyone in the tribe lived here, the layer of stone powder came loose and in some places, the layer fell hard if one swiped it with his hand.

Shao Xuan took out his stone knife and scratched on the wall to remove the stone powder layer. With the light coming through the vent, Shao Xuan saw that there were some pictures carved on the wall where there was no layer.

A woman was carrying a pot. The pot had a wide mouth and tight bottom. On the pot there were also some decorative patterns. Shao Xuan had never seen anyone in the tribe using this kind of a stone pot, for all the people in the tribe valued practical usage instead of beautiful appearances when it came to tools.

“Perhaps those living up in the mountain might have those kind of pots in their homes,” Shao Xuan thought.

When he wiped out another part on the stone wall, there were about ten warriors, chasing game with bows and arrows.

Shao Xuan remembered that Lang Ga had told him that few warriors in the tribe were able to use a bow. Because no materials were fine enough to be made into a bow that could bear the strength of a totemic warrior. The bow and arrows now were made to set up a trap, or help the hunting by driving away the game, instead of for totemic warriors’ use. However, in the picture on the wall, every warrior was holding a giant bow!

Shao Xuan intended to use his knife and scratch more stone powder down, to see other carved paintings on the wall. But after some thought, he dropped the knife, fetched some water, and carefully used a piece of animal skin to wipe the wall. He believed that the frescos on the stone wall inside this stone room, might tell him a lot of interesting things that he had no clue of before.

# Chapter 18 – Thumbs up

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Outside the cave, it was still snowing heavily. A thick layer of ice covered the riverside, and now few people from the tribe would go outside. One could only see a boundless piece of white if he looked afar in the distance.

Inside the cave, there was a bonfire burning, and the atmosphere unlike old times, heated up.

After they installed the ice blocks on those vents (to prevent wind from entering the cave through the holes), the cave was much brighter than before, and they did not have to suffer from the cold wind as well. Those feelings were new to all the kids, so two days in a row, they were in a mood of extreme excitement. All of them sat around the fire and discussed about the letters and numbers written on the stonewall.

Yes, Shao Xuan had copied all the words and numbers in the animal skin roll that were left behind by the old hunter in charge of teaching, and wrote them on the stonewall. With the light in the day, they would see those words and numbers clearly without any fire. If they could memorize and master all that was written on the wall, the old hunter would not have to start from the very beginning the next time he comes.

Unlike the others, Shao Xuan had been staying at that stone room and carefully wiping out those stone powders all day long, except when it was time for eating.

Shao Xuan had moved all sundries in that stone room to other places, for the fresco on the wall was pretty large in size.

Shao Xuan stood up and took a deep breath after the whole fresco had finally been cleared. He moved his arms and legs to ease the sore and ache before he took a few steps back to look at the picture on the stonewall with the light that poured in.

Since it was not so bright inside, Shao Xuan still needed to rely on the torch to observe the details of the fresco, for some parts of it were not distinct enough.

Aside from the two pictures, that Shao Xuan saw in the first place, there were some more astonishing pictures hidden behind the layer of stone powder.

The pictures covered agriculture and stockbreeding as well. Look at those men working on a field, and those who were whipping up the sheep...

There was someone in a fancy leather robe holding an exquisite wine cup with complex fancy patterns, there were some women picking up fruits as they held baskets in their arms.

There was even someone riding a horse, in one picture there was a man riding on horseback with a kid.

Next to it, there was a picture describing a hunting mission or a war, which was relatively larger than others, and took nearly half of the wall. In its front there was a tall horse, on its back sat a sturdy warrior who was obviously stronger than the others, with feather decorations on his head. His head raised up high to show his imposing appearance. Perhaps he was the leader of the group.

Around and behind the sturdy warrior, there were a few men on horseback riding with him. Beside them, there were some... wolves?

No, they were not wolves.

Compared with Caesar, the animals on the picture had long and upturned tails. Some of them even had curvy tails. They were probably hounds.

Some of the hounds revealed their tongues with their mouths open, as if breathing heavily. Another two inclined their head to those men on horseback, as if listening to someone's words.

In the background of the painting, there were some buildings, which were far



bigger and taller than those that Shao Xuan had seen in the tribe. He heard that people up on the mountain had better living conditions. Shao Xuan imagined in his mind based on the information he had heard, and he figured that even the houses up in the mountain could not be compared to those mansions in the fresco.

He moved his sight back to the first picture that he saw. Inside it there was a woman with fine decorations on her head, they were not as rough and simple as those decorations that women in the tribe were wearing. Instead, they were more delicate and exquisite. As for the pot that the woman was holding...

If these pots with complex decorative patterns were not stone pots...What were they? Shao Xuan thought about one possibility – pottery.

How long had these pictures existed?

If they were the same age as the stone room, then they should be at least hundreds or even thousands years old.

Before thousand years, there was agriculture like stockbreeding and farming. Even pottery existed, and hunting tools were in an unimaginable variety. They even had hounds, real hounds! Unlike Caesar, who was merely a wolf, brought back and kept by a human accidentally!

Shao Xuan suppressed the shock in his mind, and kept looking.

The fresco on the left had obvious differences from the fresco on the right part of the stone wall. In the middle that distinguished the left from the right, there were only abstract lines and shapes. So abstract that Shao Xuan could not understand. It seemed messy at first look, and Shao Xuan could not speculate its meaning by other pictures as well. However, what was obvious was that after these lines and shapes, the style of the fresco had changed very much. It fell down sharp with a feeling of loss from the earlier strong confidence. Many pictures were portraying something bleak and desolate.

Women knelt down on the ground, weeping. Kids were standing up straight, with blank and lost looks, as if they had no idea of anything. The background was not filled with those mansions, but the cave that Shao Xuan was living in.

There was no more agriculture as farming and stockbreeding. No more pictures about three or five women carrying baskets to gather food. No more riding and shooting, no more hounds, and no more pottery, whose workmanship was much more delicate than stoneware.

However, both the left and the right part of the fresco on the stonewall, there was a logo carved above the picture – the tribal totem.

The tribal totem of the scorching horn tribe looked like the two horns of *dicerorhinus*, which was a rhinoceros with two horns. But the horns were longer, with flames around them, just like the name of the tribe tried to describe.

So, was it showing the life of the scorching horn tribe?

Shao Xuan recalled that archaeologist from his last life, who had said that basically, frescos and paintings on the wall described the daily lives of men of that age, or their fantasies and hopes, which was also a kind of spiritual sustenance of mankind at that time.

The pictures carved on the stonewalls of that room were absolutely no imaginary scenes. The emotions filled up in the images was so intense. Only true experiences and real things could arouse deeper, richer, and more intense emotions of people.

What had happened in the tribe?

Natural disasters?

Man-caused calamity?

Or both fell on the tribe?

At the end of the fresco on the stonewall, there were a lot of palm-sized pictures in various styles. Take the one on the upper left for example; it had a spider resting on its net. Or the one on the right end, there were plants like bamboos or something. In one picture, there was even something as a mask, it was so creepy to look at...

In those pictures there were plants, animals, and many things that went

beyond Shao Xuan's wildest imagination.

Just as Shao Xuan fixed his attention on those frescos, he heard someone calling for him.

"Ah-Xuan! Come quickly, Ah-Xuan! Uncle Ge is here!"

The other kids had no interest in the depth of the cave. For all those years they lived inside, aside from coming to a certain place to poop, they never went into deeper places. Those parts were never their thing and they got over it once they had gone once into the depth of the cave. Therefore, the kid calling for Shao Xuan did not go towards him, but shouted directly at him.

Coming back to reality, Shao Xuan realized that today was indeed the food delivery day for Ge.

This time, Ge also brought three days worth food at one time. When Shao Xuan saw him, he still had quite some snowflakes on his coat that hadn't melted yet. However, Ge cared no more about the snow, but kept staring at those vents with the ice blocking them. He played around with the stone plate in his hands as he stared, and obviously, he hadn't expected that something like that was stored in the cave. Ever since he was in charge of food delivery, the cave had always been dark during wintertime. In the past, he had heard from someone else that there was similar stuff in the cave, but he never thought the kids would use it. In addition, since it was messy and chaotic in the orphan cave, he did not bother to do anything more. Nevertheless, unexpectedly he saw that they used them here today.

Shao Xuan asked the other kids to help "unload" the food. Now with a sufficient food supply, the kids in the cave did not act like old times, where they fight over everything, especially when it came to food. Hearing Shao Xuan's words, all the kids came to help, and then Shao Xuan distributed the food to different groups. He was no more his worry after the food was distributed to group leaders, for they would decide how to distribute to different people.

That day, Shao Xuan did not let Ge to leave immediately. Instead, he asked him to tell stories about the tribe to the kids. Ge did not have any other plans after the food was delivered anyways.

Shao Xuan merely wanted to learn more information from Ge, and see if the

stories in Ge's description could tell him a thing or two about the frescos in that stone wall. It was too bad that Ge's stories were no different from the stories he heard from Lang Ga in the past. He did not get the information he wanted to hear.

Shao Xuan drew something on the wall with a carbonated branch. He knew that Ge had glimpsed at his picture and saw what was on it. However, he acted all the same, with no abnormal behaviour. Obviously, Ge did not know what the picture was.

What Shao Xuan drew was just one of those varied pictures that were on the right side of the stonewall of the stone room. Ge was considered as an experienced warrior in the tribe, and he did not recognize that picture. Shao Xuan sighed at heart, for it seemed to be very difficult if he wanted to know more about the things in the fresco.

At the end of the fresco on the right part of the stonewall in that room, under those various pictures, there was a sentence. However, Shao Xuan could not connect them to a whole sentence because he did not know a few words in it.

Even though Shao Xuan could speak the language fluently, he was not familiar with many words and letters. He planned to ask for the help of that old hunter, the next time when the old hunter came. Shao Xuan will ask him about the meaning of those words, and learn them all when he had the opportunity.

About ten days later, that old hunter finally came down the mountain again and showed up his face in the cave again.

Seeing that there were so many changes in the cave, he was shocked and surprised to know that these kids in the cave had made much progress. He was quite pleased, so he took out another animal skin roll, ready to teach something new.

In the spare time of teaching, Shao Xuan consulted a few words from him, not all the words he asked were from the stonewall. He mixed some other words in, because Shao Xuan did not want to raise the old hunter's suspicion.

However, it turned out that Shao Xuan had thought too much. The old hunter had high interest in teaching, and nothing else. He merely assumed that Shao Xuan had seen those words from somewhere, and then he taught him one by

one, quite patiently and eager.

After that, the old hunter even praised Shao Xuan, “Those words are written down well, with a certain momentum! You will turn out to be a brave warrior!”

Shao Xuan smiled about it and did not reply. The words that were praised were from the stone wall. He copied them, so even though they were not exactly the same with the original ones, they carried some of the original charm and style, because they were copied.

Judging from that, the one who left those pictures and words on the stonewall in that room should probably be a warrior, a tough and strong one.

After the old hunter had left, Shao Xuan copied all the things in the old hunter’s newly left animal skin roll, so that the kids might review from time to time. Then he went to the stone room again.

After mastering those words, Shao Xuan finally understood the meaning of that sentence.

“One day, we shall return to our previous land. Glory is still in the fire, and the fire of scorching horn will never be put out.”

After that sentence, there was a big word – “Zan”. Perhaps that’s the name of the master of that stone room, and the one who carved all those pictures and the sentence.

The final sentence was deeply carved into the wall, much deeper than any other picture, especially the last few words. From that, one could easily see the intense emotion of the person when he left the sentence on the ground.

Even though Shao Xuan still did not know why it was painted by stone powder, he felt appreciative to get the opportunity to see them. In addition, he admired the one who left those words for him to see.

From that sentence, it was easily implied that his situation or the whole tribe’s situation was not good, or even depressing. But they did not give up.

Even if the situation was in despair, it meant that hope was still there as long as one was still alive, as long as the tribe was still there.

Shao Xuan held the carbonated branch, and drew a simple image of “thumbs

up” behind the word “Zan”.

He just gave him a thumbs up.

# Chapter 19 – Moons came out

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan spent every day in the stone room, trying to memorize all those pictures on the right side of the stone wall. He also learned to paint, thinking that perhaps it might be useful in the future. He had nothing else to do anyway.

Since every kid had stored enough fish, together with the food and firewood from the tribe, they had a nice winter. With the common-used herbs that Ge gave to Shao Xuan, there were no accidents as well. As days went by, it was quite calm, wintertime passed faster than they imagined.

Two days ago, a younger kid caught a cold and he had a fever. Shao Xuan cooked the herbs from Ge and poured the soup down his throat. After only two days, his condition stabilized. He only had to survive those few days. With a bad health, none of the herbs would have been effective. He might have been as dead as the former owner of Shao Xuan's body, before anyone could call for help from the others. Luckily, during the time before winter, all of the children became healthier. They had constantly exercised and had much better food and provision, so they did not get ill as easily as before.

Inside the stone room, Shao Xuan had placed an animal fur mat down on the ground. Sometimes he would just sleep right in front of the wall, if he worked too late on those frescos. He painted pictures with his fingers on the ground. After a picture was finished, Shao Xuan signed it. Winter had passed two thirds of its duration, and they had only twenty to thirty days left. If they survived these last days, they would have a better living situation. Shao Xuan felt listless and that his body was moldy with rust, since he had spent so much time indoors.

As he was thinking, Caesar, who was lying beside him moved his ears and looked towards the entrance of the stone room.

Then Shao Xuan heard the voice of Ge.

Today was not the day that Ge was supposed to deliver food. Or was it that spending so much time in the stone room messed up his brain?

Filled with curiosity, Shao Xuan walked out of the stone room and went to see what happened.

“Uncle Ge, what brings you here today?” Shao Xuan, took a look at the triangles that he drew on the wall to keep track of time. Because Ge would come every three days, Shao Xuan did not use the character “Zheng”, which contains five strokes. Instead, he drew triangles on the wall. Now the last triangle missed one stroke, so that meant Ge was only supposed to come by tomorrow.

Ge, standing next to the bonfire, shook the snowflakes off his coat and then took out a roll of animal skin, “I’m here for some kids. Gather all the names on this roll, who are older than eleven.”

Shao Xuan took the animal skin roll and had a look. On it there were seven names, including Ba and Tu. Those two kids suddenly got sparkling eyes and they stared at him hopefully, as if they thought of something.

The names on that animal skin roll were all those that Shao Xuan knew, so he gathered them around, including those two who were taking a nap. The two kids that got woken up by force were still sleepy, but when they saw Ge and those few kids standing beside him, they suddenly came to their minds and instantly stopped rubbing their eyes. Instead, the kids quickly gathered their things, and rushed towards Ge with big smiles on their faces.

Ge’s sight hesitated on the fish teeth necklaces hanging from these seven kids’ necks, and he carefully checked all their name pallets. On normal days he was in charge of food delivery, so he had some impressions about the kids in the orphan cave. But this time, one could never be too careful. He had to check and make sure.

“Yes, exactly seven.”



Ge tossed each kid a leather cloak after he had rolled the animal skin back, “Wear them, and follow me later... Mo-Er, you come with me, too.”

Mo-Er was only ten years old, but he would turn eleven after this winter.

At Ge’s command, Mo-Er got dressed and carried his knife. Unlike the other kids’ admiration or excitement, Mo-Er walked towards Ge calmly, as if he had expected it.

“Fine. Ah-Xuan, you can go back to sleep now. I’ll take them out. Tomorrow I’ll come back with the food.” Ge lifted the straw curtain and left with the eight kids.

Shao Xuan lifted the thick straw curtain a little and the icy wind pouring in made his eyes feel a stabbing pain. His sight was blurred but he could still see the thick layer of snow outside the cave, and the path that was created by Ge. On both sides of the path, the snow was higher than the kids walking on the path. Their thin figures were trembling in the cold, but they followed Ge closely, with no hesitation and no intention to turn back their heads. Instead they were eager to leave.

Dropping the straw curtain, Shao Xuan came back into the cave. The kids left behind were no longer sleepy as they stared at the fire, blankly.

Shao Xuan knew why.

After winter, there would be a Snow Festival and some sacramental activities. The most important thing during the sacramental activities, was the annual Totemic Awakening. One would turn a totemic warrior, if one could awaken his totemic power, or else one must wait for another year.

Normally, kids over ten years old would be sent up the mountain for pre-selection, before winter’s end. The Shaman would keep those kids with high odds to have their totemic powers awakened, and send the other kids back. However, compared with other kids in the tribe, most kids in orphan cave had poor health, so they would be postponed a year on the pre-selection, which was eleven years old. Mo-Er was an exception, for he was not considered an orphan. He was in much better fitness than others because of his constant training and practicing.

The kids following up with Ge must be quite excited and anxious. All of them expect to be chosen by the Shaman, for as long as they got chosen, they had a ninety percent chance to awaken their totemic powers this time, else they would awaken their totemic power next year with one hundred percent certainty.

Shao Xuan was only nine now, and he would only turn ten after winter. It was still too early for him, so after Ge had left, he told the kids to approach him if anything happened. Then he went back to continue working on the frescos, in the stone room.

After four days, when Ge was delivering food again, he brought back four upset kids. Tu and Ba were among those, who had been sent back. The eldest kids were kept. Being thirteen years old already, they were naturally kept. Turning fourteen after the winter, it would be abnormal if they did not awaken their totemic powers by then.

The former “leader of the cave” was also a thirteen year old, and he knew someone living on the mountainside. During this winter he was preparing for training. Most warriors believed that before one awakened his totemic power, the stronger he was, the stronger he would become. So Ku asked some family to take him in during wintertime. He would be better fed, and learn some experience from other totemic warriors. It was far better than staying in the cave. And that was also the reason why Ku went up to the mountain early instead of spending the winter in orphan cave.

“Don’t be upset. Sooner or later you will become totemic warriors. Perhaps next year.” Ge comforted the four sad kids, and left after he dropped off the food.

“I envy those, who were chosen by the Shaman. They can listen to the Shaman’s lecture.” Said one of the kids brought back by Ge.

“Hey, what did the Shaman say to you?” The other kids got around, asking curiously.

“The Shaman...”

One minute earlier, the four kids were drooping their heads. But on that word, they raised their heads up at a forty-five degree angle, and inside their eyes was admiration and respect.

Shao Xuan curled his lips inside.

Lectures? More of a brainwashing!

That old wizard.

Shao Xuan could only curse in his mind. He was not stupid enough to say it out loud. See those four kids? Only a few days spent with that old wizard, they got a complete brainwashing!

After that little episode, the life inside went back to normal. Even though Tu and Ba were still upset, life continued.

During a night, when Shao Xuan was in the midst of sleeping, he dreamt about two crescent moons, melted snow, ice and fire...Until he heard shouting, and the shouting got louder and louder, and that woke him up from his dreams.

The sound was not coming from the children in the cave, but from people outside.

An older child listened carefully after he woke up, and suddenly he became very cheerful, "It must be the end of the winter!"

Shao Xuan yawned and tightened the blanket, wrapping it around him. It was still night, and the fire had long been put out. Nothing could be seen, and only the discussions among the kids could be heard.

Shao Xuan asked Caesar to lead him to the entrance.

Lifting some thick straw curtains, Shao Xuan could hear the shouting more clearly, which were obviously filled with excitement and joy.

Regardless of the icy wind, Shao Xuan looked up in the sky.

Snow stopped falling, and the long-disappeared moons showed their appearance once again. Even though they were only outlines of crescent moons, they brought a lot of hope and a dynamic atmosphere.

Winter had ended, and the sacramental activities of the Snow Festival were

scheduled.

Guess how many people would become totemic warriors? That was the common question of people in the tribe and almost all of them were thinking about that as they shouted out their joy.

Everywhere in the tribe there was someone standing on the roof and staring at the sky, totally ignoring the icy wind. Just as they stopped excitedly shouting and began discussing about the coming Snow Festival, they heard a child's voice from the orphan cave.

"The moons came out, yeah... How joyful, yeah...So joyful, yeah...yeah, yeah, yeah!"

# Chapter 20 – The color of wildness

---

Translated by Sunyancai

The lyrics from that song came true.

Shao Xuan had an urge to slap himself in the face for singing that stupid song!

When the sun came out and the snow melted, Ge, together with some men, blocked the kids' way when they were holding the fishing tools, intending to rush to the riverside to go fishing.

Seeing Ge's familiar smile, and looking at the men Ge brought, the kids finally realized what he was up to. Fuck! Every year when winter ended and before the opening of the rituals of the Snow Festival, they would be dragged to the stream to take a bath.

The most annoying bath!!

If put it in an elegant way, it was required to take a bath before tribal rituals. While the realistic situation was that, those who were unwilling to go take a bath themselves would be carried to the stream and be given a brush-bath by force. Looking at the warriors that Ge brought! One had to be brushed anyway!

Luckily, Shao Xuan wanted to take a bath. Throughout the winter, he hadn't even washed his face a single time, and his hair became a sticky mess long ago. If Ge had not mentioned it, he would have never imagined how he looked like now.

Shao Xuan walked towards the stream and looked at his reflection in the water. The image was blurred by ripples, but still, he could roughly see that he looked disheveled.

Strong and powerful warriors could jump directly into the freezing cold stream, but it was totally different for kids. Ge had told someone to boil some water before they arrived so that the warriors could mix the hot water with the cold stream water in a ladle, and then pour it on the naked whelp that was being pinned down on a flat stone. At the same time, they used something like grass vines to scrub his body constantly. Together with every single scrub, streams of black water would flow down. Those whelps were just as dirty as mud!

Poured on with water, and scrubbed by grass vines, those who had completely experienced the whole process would be tossed to the haystack on the side. Someone would wrap them in clean animal skins and carry them back into the orphan cave. The animal skin that they had used to wear and the blankets they used to wrap on were also taken away by women in the tribe. They would be sent back after they were washed and dried.

Shao Xuan's eyelids twitched seeing this.

He felt like that he was in a meat processing factory...

Seeing Ge approaching, Shao Xuan said immediately, "Give me a ladle and I'll do it myself!"

Since Shao Xuan was willing to comply, Ge tossed him a ladle and then focused his attention on the other kids. None of the kids who had survived the winter could escape from this.

After being washed and scrubbed, the kids back in the cave were told that the Snow Festival rituals would be held the day after tomorrow. That was the Shaman's decision so naturally no one would complain, let alone reject it. It was thus clear to see how successful that old wizard's brainwashing was. Even after being toyed around like that, they did not have the slightest bit of complaint towards Shaman.

Three days after winter was over, the thick layer of snow by the entrance of the cave had melted away quickly. Of course, the ice covers in the vents lasted no longer either. But as the winter ended, the temperature rose quickly. So if covered with animal skin blankets, one would not feel too cold. Everything seemed to be vivid again.

The deepest impression that these two days left on Shao Xuan, was that many people who used to pay no attention to their appearances and were as slovenly as beggars, suddenly cleaned themselves up and were appropriately dressed up. Even if their clothes of animal skins were no good in quality with holes here and there, they were at least clean and tidy. Also, their hair, long or short, was carefully combed.

At the very day of the Snow Festival, all the kids were sleeping in the cave. The rituals wouldn't be starting until the night, and now they were not permitted to go fishing by the river. So they continued sleeping, as someone would come and wake them up when it was time.

The straw curtain of the cave was lifted, and Ge, coming from the outside, shouted out towards those sleeping kids, "Okay, boys. Get up and get prepared! We need to go up the mountain!"

Shao Xuan hardly recognized Ge when he first saw him. Now Ge was wearing a pair of horns from some fierce animal, and around his neck, there were a few animal bone necklaces. Also, the animal skin clothes he was wearing were not the usual ones. The patterns on them were very clear, and the fur stood out like steel needles. They looked the opposite of soft, as the fur was probably from some ferocious beast.

Aside from different clothes, Ge painted some patterns on his face with plant pigment. On both his cheeks there were outlines similar to their tribal totem. On his forehead, nose, and jaw, there were also painted lines. Every time when a hunting team was on a mission, totemic warriors would paint those symbols on their faces. Although totemic lines would show up on their bodies when hunting, painting on the face before hunting became a traditional custom as well as a ceremony. Now it was the same with rituals.

Seriously speaking, it was Shao Xuan's first time to attend a ritual. When he woke up at this place, it had passed the ritual seasons, and in his memories there were no related experiences. It felt new and novel.

All the kids in the cave were pretty excited about the rituals, for such an event required the attendance of all the people in the tribe, no matter where they lived and who they were. From residents in the mountain top to people in

mountain foot district; from the strongest warriors to the infants crying piteously for food; all must go up to the top and attend the ceremony.

It was the symbol of a year's beginning, as well as the most joyful event every year.

The ritual location was at the top of the mountain, near to Shaman's residence.

Shao Xuan followed everyone out of the cave and left Caesar inside.

It grew dark as night would soon fall. The active night swallows from the winter seemed to have noticed something, so they hid their tracks as Shao Xuan saw none tonight.

As they were marching to the top, Shao Xuan saw others climbing up the mountain in groups. They were all "dressed up". On their heads, there were antlers, horns, feathers, and some other decorations that Shao Xuan could not recognize. Around their necks, there were ugly necklaces made from ferocious beasts. Look at those animal teeth on their necklaces! The ones that the kids in the orphan cave were wearing were no comparison to them.

All totemic warriors, men, and women had painted the same lines on their faces, as the ones on Ge's face. Shao Xuan saw a female warrior whose head was decorated with multicolored feathers. Around her neck were a few bone necklaces, and on her waist was a belt made from some kind of snakes, with gorgeous patterns. Also, there were bones hanging down her leather skirt as ornaments, that collided with each other and created clicking sounds while she walked.

Ge said that she was a tough female warrior and she had a high reputation in their tribe. Other women around all showed admiration and respect, seeing the decorations on her.

Compared to them, Shao Xuan and his companions looked like some thin chicks walking around a group of man-faced King-Kongs.

Shao Xuan also saw other kids in the tribe. Whether they were from the mountain foot district, mountainside district, or lived up near the mountain top



district, those kids were dressed like the adults, just less impressive to Shao Xuan. But what was obvious was that, the higher they lived, the more “advanced” were their decorations.

The kid walking along with that tough female warrior was as proud as a peacock. With a look of “What crappy things are you wearing?”.

Shao Xuan’s eyes twitched and he looked away from that direction, only to find that all the whelps in the cave around him had sparkling eyes, staring at those kids with “advanced decorations” jealously.

All around was so aggressive, so fierce.

Wild and mysterious, all was covered in intense colors of the wilderness.

Shao Xuan’s expression stayed stiff all the time. That was the first time that he felt himself living in a primitive tribe so clearly.

# Chapter 21 – You are burning

---

Translated by Sunyancai

This was Shao Xuan's first trip to the mountaintop.

In the tribe, people with higher position would also live higher near the top.

As they were closer to the mountaintop, Shao Xuan realized that the kids around, and those warriors leading their way ahead, including Ge, had lost their casualty as they went and became much more serious and reserved.

When Shao Xuan and his companions arrived, there were already a lot of people gathered around the fire pit. People living in mountain foot district stood relatively far from the fire pit. In fact, they were standing according to their living positions. The higher they lived in the mountain, the nearer they stood to the fire pit.

Luckily, even though they stood far from the center, the spot they stood on was a high terrain, so one could also barely see the situation by the fire pit.

How many people did the tribe have in total?

In the past he was not sure, but now, Shao Xuan had an estimation.

Today's ceremony required all people in the tribe to attend. You had to come even if you were ill in bed, or had trouble walking. Shao Xuan calculated roughly and found out that the population of the tribe should be no less than a thousand, probably around one thousand and five hundred.

Over a thousand people did not seem to be very much in Shao Xuan's eyes, but since he came to the tribe, it was his first time seeing so many people, so it was a lively day for him.

On the mountaintop, there was an empty ground, in the center of which there was a crater. And in the center of the crater, there was a flame swaying in the wind.

The fire pit.

This was also Shao Xuan's first time to see the tribe's fire pit, which was not even close to the image he had in mind.

Shao Xuan had questioned why the tribe's fire pit would be located at the mountaintop. After all, it was the coldest place in the whole mountain. What's more, there was already a well-developed fire maker. Why bother to keep a fire pit? Everyone spoke with extreme reverence when they talked about the fire pit. And the way they looked at the mountaintop was with unshakable devotion.

He had heard from people in the tribe, that the fire pit was connected with the tribe's prosperity. As for how they were connected, Shao Xuan had never heard a word. Now, he may find an answer with his own eyes.

The big empty space on the mountaintop was enough for everyone in the tribe to stand on.

The crater had a radius of four or five meters, but the flame burning in the middle was just like normal candlelight. It was not bright, and it seemed like it could easily be blown out by the wind. Also, inside the fire pit, Shao Xuan did not see any wood or anything burnable. Under the flame, there were no combustion-supporting materials.

This was an eternal fire in the fire pit.

Around the fire pit, there a circle of man-height thick timber piles. A stone bowl was placed on top of every timber pile. Fresh meat, fruits and bird eggs were piled up in every stone bowl as sacrificial offerings.

Beside the timber piles there were crowds of people standing there. From the discussion around, Shao Xuan learnt that those were the strongest warriors from different hunting teams. Some of them were still young, while the others were middle-aged. In total there were fifty warriors.

Their faces were painted with the same lines as those on Ge's face. However,

what differed was that the totem on their face was no longer in a single dark color. White and red was mixed up in those lines, and they were dressed up in a grander style. Someone wore a pair of giant antlers on his head, which were much bigger in size than any of the antlers Shao Xuan had seen others wearing. They nearly covered the warrior's body inside.

Aside from the warrior with the super giant antlers, the other warriors were wearing exaggerated decorations as well. At first, Shao Xuan assumed that the warriors he saw on his way up were already outstanding on their decorations, but unexpectedly there were some with more garish decorations.

Suddenly, the surrounding crowd quieted down. Shao Xuan looked up.

It was the Chief and the Shaman. People automatically made way for them, being extremely respectful.

There were also giant horns on the Chief's head, while the Shaman had no exaggerated decorations. He was holding a cane, with his back somewhat bent, and wearing a grey animal skin cloak.

This was Shao Xuan's second time seeing the Shaman, and he felt that the Shaman had not changed much since the last year, when he told him to keep Caesar.

The ones following the Chief and the Shaman, were those who received greatest attention during this ceremony.

Near eighty kids aged from ten to fourteen followed the Chief and the Shaman closely, and then stood in line beside the fire pit.

Shao Xuan saw the four kids from the orphan cave, including Mo-Er.

When they were back in the cave, they were very hot-tempered. However, now they were quiet and calm, standing there in sleeveless tops made from animal skin, with their hair combed and decorated with some bones ornaments. Ever since Shao Xuan knew them, they had never been more tidy and clean.

"So many kids this year!" someone whispered beside him.

"Yeah, I agree. Last year it was only thirty, forty at most. But this year, the

number doubled.”

“This is a good sign! With so much fresh-blood joining, our tribe will be much stronger and more powerful than before.”

“.....”

People were discussing, and the kids around Shao Xuan also murmured because they all felt envious. Almost everyone wondered when they could stand on the spot by the fire pit themselves.

After some time waiting, the preparation work had been finished, and the ceremony began.

The Chief was a strong warrior named Ao, and people said that his strength ranked in the top three among the tribe.

Ao delivered a short speech first, about last year’s harvest and their hope for the next year, to boost the morale. Shao Xuan had heard a lot of those similar pep-talks during his last life, so he felt no extra excitement. But the people surrounding couldn’t be more thrilled, and some of them even yelled with open arms after the Chief’s speech. All the brats also followed the yelling with their faces flushed.

After the Chief’s speech, the Shaman took over. After all, the Shaman was supposed to serve as the main character during this ceremony.

Nearly eighty kids surrounded the fire pit, and they were standing closer to the center than those fierce warriors standing by those timber piles.

The Shaman carried his cane and stood at the side of the fire pit with his back bent. He opened his arms and began to sing.

The atmosphere of the scene suddenly changed, from the earlier excitement to being tense. Each and every one kept their mouths shut and even their breathing became very careful, as if fearing to affect the singing.

Shao Xuan did not recognize what the Shaman sang, it didn’t seem to be the language that the people used to communicate throughout the tribe. And the tone sounded weird.

However, the weirder thing was still yet to come.

Along with the Shaman's singing, the flame danced and rolled over and over. Without any combustion supporting materials, the flame grew bigger and bigger. As it spread around, the flame itself grew higher, until the flame extended to the edge of the fire pit, and covered the whole crater. The flame itself grew to at least three meters high, and in the meantime, on the top of the flame, gradually appeared a picture outlined by flames. It became more and more clear, and was gradually combined with the giant flame down there. The top curved itself symmetrically, and finally formed into two horns, wrapped in dancing flames.

That was exactly the totem of the scorching horn tribe!

There were three Flames in the fire pit. The first Flame – Soaring Flame!

The Soaring Flame became the totem!

As the totem appeared above the fire pit, the totem patterns on the warriors' bodies began to become more obvious.

Everyone stared at the direction of the fire pit, and their eyes were filled with reverence.

It was completely dark, and the two moons were hanging up on the two ends of the sky. However, on the mountaintop, it was pretty bright and covered with a color of red because of the dancing flames in the fire pit.

The Shaman's singing did not stop, yet it grew much louder and more sonorous. Then, sounds of drums joined the singing with a certain rhythm. The percussion of bones and stones could also be heard along the singing.

Some people clapping their hand, drums resounding high and low. However, the timbre was totally different from the drum's sound that Shao Xuan had heard during his former life.

Bones' clicking, stones' hitting and drum's beating melted together.

The male and female warriors standing beside the timber piles began to move and they joined the Shaman's singing. One by one, they kept a certain distance and circled around the fire pit, as they were dancing with their arms and legs.

That was the ritual dance that was passed down from the beginning of the

tribe's establishment.

Shao Xuan recalled the words of his schoolmate whose major was archaeology, "Many tribes have their own styles of ritual dances. That is a very important part in each tribe's ritual. It carries with it the unique decorum of a certain era, and conveys the worship they have towards their tribal ancestors. The ancient dance is not supposed to be delivered or learnt just by any normal person. Ancient traditions must be followed and respected."

And now, those who were dancing around the fire pit were all elites in the tribe, and those who had earned the qualification to dance the ritual dance on the ritual activities.

Even though some moves seemed to be ridiculous in Shao Xuan's eyes, it was a great honor that everyone desired to acquire. When back in the cave, Shao Xuan often heard some kids' daydream about becoming one of those ritual dancers someday, and dancing during a ritual ceremony.

The melody played in the ceremony was incomparably weird, as every individual syllable sounded harsh or dull when it was singled out. However, when combined together, it was perfectly suitable for that certain time, under those certain circumstances. People felt it natural to hear that melody here and now. During this ceremony, the melody and rhythm was supposed to be like that.

However, compared with the ritual dance and weird rhythm, Shao Xuan cared more about the kids standing by the fire pit.

As the picked out warriors were dancing the ritual dance surrounding the fire pit, the flames in the fire pit grew bigger and bigger, and then many flames flew out from there.

Yes, flew out.

One after another, sparks and flames flew out from the fire pit and they floated in the air.

The second Flame of the fire pit – Flying Flame!

However, the kids standing near the fire pit did not try to avoid, but kept standing there respectfully, and let those sparks and flames float down onto

their bodies.

Shao Xuan stared at that direction with his eyes wide open. The sparks and flames did not burn them as they floated down onto the kids' bodies, and they did not even burn their clothes. It was like the flames and sparks integrated into their bodies directly.

With more flames and sparks integrated into their bodies, some kids began to show the special patterns of totemic warriors on their bodies. The more they contacted with the flames and sparks, the clearer and more complete their totemic patterns became.

The flying flames did not stop after they made contacts with the kids chosen by the Shaman, who stood around the fire pit. Quite a lot flames and sparks also flew around and afar. Some flames and sparkles also flew to the place where Shao Xuan was sitting at.

Seeing the approaching flames and sparks, Shao Xuan wanted to step aside naturally. However, he forced himself to calm down and remained standing still. Since others did not move, it should be not as harmful as he imagined.

Indeed, Shao Xuan only felt a comfortable feeling of warmth when he was contacted by the flame, with no pain of burning.

At that time, Shao Xuan was fully relieved, so he kept staring at the fire pit, regardless of the fact that more and more flames and sparks flew towards him. The kids around the fire pit were the luckiest ones among the whole year. They would acquire strength and power through the fire pit, and awaken their totemic power. He wondered if the three kids from orphan cave and Mo-Er would be able to successfully awaken their totemic powers this year.

As he was gazing at the pond, Tu, who stood right beside Shao Xuan suddenly called out his name in a low voice.

“Ah...Ah-Xuan! Ah-Xuan!”

“What?” Shao Xuan came back to himself and moved his eyesight from the fire pit, only to realize that every kid surrounding him was staring at him as if he was a ghost.

“What’s wrong?” Shao Xuan wondered. He was too enthralled by the fire pit



and did not notice his surroundings.

The few kids hurriedly stepped backwards, yet still stared at Shao Xuan in shock.

Tu swallowed his saliva and said, “you... you are burning...”

“Burn what?” Shao Xuan was still confused. What were they saying? I wasn’t burning...

“You... you are burning...with fire...”

# Chapter 22 – The flame doesn't harm anyone

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan's first reaction towards Tu's words was rejection. Even if he had been staring at the fire pit, and didn't care about the coming flames, it didn't mean he wouldn't notice the pain of fire burning him.

What's do you mean "You are burning"?

How could you not feel anything if you were burning?

Just to be safe, Shao Xuan watched the sparks and flames come closer, and only shifted his attention after he made sure it was harmless. What's more, all the surrounding people were just fine, and even those kids standing right beside the flame pond were totally okay. And now you bloody told me that I'm on fire?

However, even if Shao Xuan did not believe it at heart, but judging from the looks of the kids around him, there really must be something wrong.

He checked his hands, all clear, and there were no visible flames on his legs as well.

"Ah-Xuan... your head... on your head..."

Shao Xuan hesitated, and finally he raised his arm to touch his head.

It felt no different. Nothing abnormal.

On a second try, there was still no abnormal feeling.

His hair was intact, and no smell of burning could be smelt. However, when he looked up...

What the fuck?!

When Shao Xuan finally saw the fire on his head, it had already grown big. At first, there was only a small flame on his head, but now he was basically wearing a bonfire as a giant hat. Also, with more and more flames and sparks flying towards him, the flame on his head grew bigger and bigger, with a downwards spreading trend.

Shao Xuan could clearly feel the fire on his head, and he could also see his bangs being wrapped in flame. However, he felt no pain, and when he touched it with his hand, he felt nothing abnormal.

It was useless when he took off his clothes and tapped them on his head. The flame kept spreading downwards and the flying flames and sparks directly melted into Shao Xuan's arms, legs and torso, with no obvious sign of moving to the head.

But, aside from the panic caused by the suddenness in the beginning, Shao Xuan quickly calmed himself down.

This was not the world he knew well, and nothing could be deduced with his original logic and theories.

Since the flame was from the fire pit, and he felt no pain of burning, Shao Xuan stopped using his clothes to put out the fire, and instead, he stood there, trying to think about what he should do next.

The people standing in front of Shao Xuan did not notice his condition, as their attention was totally fixed on the fire pit. However, it was a completely different case for the people standing behind Shao Xuan. Especially some elderly, who had attended many Snow Festivals, yet no one had ever witnessed such circumstances as Shao Xuan was experiencing now.

At the meantime, the Shaman who was singing by the fire pit also had a minor pause in his singing that no one would notice unless one paid extra attention. After that slight pause, he continued to host the ceremony. He could definitely not leave now, he had to stay right where he was. The ceremony by the fire pit was only finished by two thirds, and the remaining one third of the ceremony was the most important part.

Perhaps to most of the warriors in the tribe, the second Flame was the most remarkable and conspicuous part among the three Flames of the fire pit. Because during the second Flame, a group of new totemic warriors would appear. All hunting teams which had lost some warriors, focused their attention, waiting to recruit some of the kids there once they turned into totemic warriors.

But to the Shaman himself, totemic warriors' quantity was only a minor aspect. He wished to see the condition of the final Flame.

However, even if he could not leave, the Shaman would not ignore the things happening in there. So as the Shaman kept singing, he winked at Chief Ao's direction.

Chief Ao standing there, had already noticed the abnormal circumstances at Shao Xuan's direction, and was hesitating about whether to go there or not. After all, the Shaman knew better about rituals than him, and moving without the Shaman's permission during a ritual could bring disastrous consequences upon the ceremony. Being the chief of the tribe, naturally he had to consider the big picture and put the tribe's best interest ahead, instead of a single person or some group of people's benefit.

Receiving the Shaman's wink, the Chief hinted others to continue, while he moved his body towards the spot where the abnormal things were happening.

Most of the people were gazing at the fire pit, and since the Chief's movement was so fast, not many people had realized what had happened.

Shao Xuan was just hesitating on whether to let the flame grow bigger, or shout out for help.

Without doubt, Shao Xuan cherished his life. If it was not the fact that he felt no actual harm, he would have shouted out for help already. However, firstly, the flame did not burn him or bring him actual pain; secondly, it was after all the annually most important ceremony of the tribe. Even those arrogant warriors suppressed their arrogance and behaved like civilized people, how

could he take the hatred from everyone when his shouting sabotaged the great ritual? This was the only tribe in this area, and being all alone in this world, he could not afford to be hated and abandoned.

As he was thinking, he felt a shadow in front of him.

Shao Xuan looked up, and just saw the Chief's curious eyes.

There were so many people on the mountaintop. Shao Xuan had heard no steps or people moving to clear a path, yet the Chief silently appeared in front of him! He was just beside the fire pit!

The surrounding kids were rather nervous and their attention had long since moved away from the fire pit. They could not awaken their totemic powers anyway this year, so Shao Xuan's accident right under their noses certainly seemed to be more attractive. Now since the Chief had come, obviously Shao Xuan was in a great trouble, as far as they were concerned.

"Chief..."

Ge noticed the situation and before he could say anything, he was stopped by Ao. Ao raised his hand to show that others shouldn't be distracted by them.

The surrounding people hurriedly focused their concentration and looked at the fire pit again. In their hearts they prayed that the coming year would promise more game and everything would go smoothly.

Among them, surely there were some with less concentration, those would constantly glimpse at Shao Xuan's direction with irrepressible curiosity.

Ao looked at the kid in front of him, filled with curiosity as well.

Is he awakening his totemic power?

That kid was absolutely less than eleven years old, and compared with the kids around the fire pit, he appeared to be much weaker. During the pre-selection, he had seen every kid brought from the mountain foot district, yet he had no memory of this little kid.

Apparently this was also the Chief's first time in meeting up with such circumstances. However, since the Shaman had given an order, all he had to do was to take the kid to the Shaman.

“Don’t be afraid, for the flame doesn’t harm anyone.” Ao comforted Shao Xuan in a low voice, and then lifted him up by the animal skin clothes he was wearing.

Earlier Shao Xuan was thinking with his head bowed so he did not notice how the Chief got here from the fire pit. But now he knew.

Ao jumped up directly and stepped on the shoulders of the audience. He seemed tall and strong, but the movements of his were quite lissome. He lifted Shao Xuan, yet he acted as if he and Shao Xuan were as light as a feather as he jumped over the people in the tribe. Before Shao Xuan could catch his breath, they had arrived and landed by the fire pit.

Ao told Shao Xuan to stand among the other kids, and then stepped backwards to his original spot.

Adding another kid by the fire pit naturally drew the attention of the people who were staring at the fire pit all the time. Some tried to whisper a thing or two with the one standing beside them, but a look from Ao, quickly straightened them out.

Some young warriors dancing the ritual dance almost missed a step because of distraction. But they quickly cursed in their heart, focused their mind again, and carefully continued to do the ritual dance.

However, many people could not fight the curiosity they had in their hearts. Is the kid added to the group also awakening his totemic power? Why was he not chosen during the pre-selection?

Too young at age?

People did not question the Shaman’s ability, so they guessed the fault was with the age. Aside from age, perhaps someone made a mistake when he went down to the mountain to do the preparations.

What on earth happened? And why was the kid wearing a ball of fire on his head?

Just as people were wondering, Ao looked away from the fire pit as he returned to his spot. He looked down to his hand that held Shao Xuan earlier.

That vigorous big hand that had killed countless game, had been burnt red.

What was he telling that kid again? The flame doesn't harm anyone??

# Chapter 23 – Changes

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan's joining in the middle was merely a small episode of this year's ceremony, even though it was obviously different from other ceremonies. However, even if people in the tribe had their own guesses at heart, their most concerning thing now was still about the awakening kids around the fire pit.

Sai was extremely thrilled as he carefully experienced the obvious changes in his body, and the totemic patterns which appeared on his arms. But naturally, he also noticed that someone suddenly joined them out of the blue. Sai slightly turned his head to take a look, only to find out that it was Shao Xuan, covered in a ball of fire.

It was a small world where enemies often crossed each other's path.

Isn't that fellow still too young? He is only supposed to be ten years old after today's Snow Festival. Why is he here?

Seeing Shao Xuan standing right next to himself, who was two years younger, Sai's heart rate raced up apprehensively. Every time when Sai thought about having been beaten up by Shao Xuan and the others in the cave before winter, he would get quite angry. In fact, he was quite excited when he was chosen by the Shaman this year. He planned to bring back some ferocious beast when he went on a mission with his new hunting team after awakening his totemic power, and then take its body to the entrance of orphan cave, so those little bastards would be able to see his game closely, especially Shao Xuan. But now, what was happening?

Shao Xuan also noticed that he was standing right next to Sai, the minute he



was tossed here. However, now he had no interest in dealing with him.

Before, he could only observe the fire pit from afar, and now Shao Xuan finally was able to feel the tribal fire pit closely. He felt like he was surrounded by a sea of fire, but with no feeling of burning. All that he felt was warmth, and the warmth had driven away all the coldness left in his body by the winter.

The totemic pattern on the kids standing around the fire pit appeared to be fiery red. It became like that after the flames had entered their bodies, they awakened the strength that was hidden within their flesh. And the process was clearly more restrained.

However, Shao Xuan's changes were much fiercer.

The fire which originally gathered on his head now had spread down to his body. Shao Xuan's eyesight was filled with fire, the only thing he was not sure of, was whether it was the fire on his head, or the fire flown over from the fire pit.

Shao Xuan felt some pain in his brain, and also his body temperature rose up, with heat gathering at his glabella, and then spreading to his forehead, face, neck, torso, and limbs...

With no mirror, Shao Xuan could not see the changes on his face, but seeing that fire red totemic patterns existed on the other kids' faces, he assumed that the same must have happened on his face. Feeling the heat stretching from his shoulder down to his limbs, Shao Xuan turned his sight to his arms.

Earlier, he took off his animal skin coat in order to put out the fire, and then left it there without putting it back on. So now, Shao Xuan was only wearing a sleeveless sweater made from animal skin. The totemic patterns appeared on his arms together with the spreading heat, they could be seen quite clearly.

The flames and sparks flowing from the fire pit became denser as time went by, and the flame inside the fire pit had a trend of spreading out. Everyone in the tribe was busy praying, so Shao Xuan covered in fire stood out less.

The dancing flames in the fire pit grew more and more violent. The fire pit now was no longer that large crater with a small fire that Shao Xuan saw at first. Now the whole fire pit was like a big volcano, waiting to erupt. However, it was

not dreadful like before, but people felt the urge to worship when seeing the fire pit like that.

The Shaman's singing had reached the third stage, and at the final syllable, the Shaman raised up his arms and suddenly moved away his hand. The gray and white animal skin cloak instantly got flooded by the spreading-out flames.

Third Flame of the fire pit – Spreading Flame!

The flames in the fire pit had just a gentle change, but now the flames no longer flew out, instead the fire poured out like lava and instantly flooded everyone at the ceremony, and then without stopping, it went towards the mountain foot area.

Near the mountain foot area, Caesar, who was left in the cave because of the ritual ceremony, stared at the entrance of the cave with growling sounds coming from his throat.

Outside the cave, it was covered by fire.

The quickly spreading flames covered the whole mountain, but didn't burn any straw or tree. It seemed that the flame was not lethal at all, but Caesar hiding in the cave feared it a lot. If possible, he would literally dig down under the ground and hide there.

And, the night swallows which had already retreated to the edge of residential area, reluctantly flew up and went further away seeing that approaching fire.

The Shaman was standing beside the fire pit, with a serious-look all the time. However, now, he finally showed a joyful smile. There was no need to look down the mountain, yet he could already feel where the flames had reached.

The expansion scope was a lot larger than the last few years. In fact, ever since he took place as the Shaman in the tribe, he had never seen any third flame of the fire pit reach such a large scope!

It was a good omen...

"Luck!" The Shaman shouted.

“Luck!” everyone in the tribe followed the shout with cheer.

“The flame of the Scorching Horns may never die!” Chief Ao also joyfully shouted out.

“The flame of the Scorching Horns may never die!” People in the tribe echoed loudly. Every single one of them was more than excited. Since the Shaman claimed that the coming year would be a lucky one, it surely will be! How could they not to get thrilled and excited?

The spreading flame lasted for about half an hour, and then it began to fade away from the mountain. In the end, only the flames inside the fire pit kept burning and dancing, and the totem above that flame existed all the time.

After that, the atmosphere became lighter and less serious. The scene was filled with joy and people were quite relaxed. Since people in the tribe needed to vent out their excitement, they all went down the mountain in small groups, laughing, chatting, and planning to have a barbecue party with their close friends and families after they got home. They would have some fruit wine and after that they would have a good sleep, and wait for the promising new year to come.

Ge also led the kids down the mountain to the orphan cave. They did not worry about getting attacked by night swallows that evening. Because besides for Caesar, no wild birds or animals would be able to enter their residential area.

Unlike most of the people in the tribe, Shao Xuan and the other kids who had awakened their totemic powers had to stay, and they will have to stay up in the mountain for some time, because they had to listen to the Shaman’s second lecture.

Nearly eighty kids were standing beside the fire pit, and most of them awakened their totemic powers successfully, except for four of them. Those four kids left with disappointment, but thinking about the fact that they would definitely awaken their totemic powers next year, they were less depressed already.

Shao Xuan and the others stayed beside the fire pit. And after everyone else in the tribe had gone, they were brought into a stone house by a few warriors,

That stone house was much more firm and solid than the wooden houses that Shao Xuan had seen down the mountain. Also it was quite large, for it had enough room for over seventy kids.

After their totemic powers awakened, their breath seemed to become easier than before. Every piece of muscle and every single bone in their body seemed to be reformed, and they were filled with endless strength. Even if they looked the same as before, the inner part of themselves had changed essentially.

However, Shao Xuan was still a little upset and gloomy.

The other kids were either discussing about their feeling of awakened totemic powers, or trying to gesture with each other because of excitement. If it weren't for the situation that someone was watching, they would've started competing with each other instantly.

After he had carefully looked at the others around him for a few times, Shao Xuan stepped forward a few steps and poked on the one who was bragging to the other kids, "Hey, you!"

"What..." Sai got interrupted and he turned around, but instantly he took a step back vigilantly, after seeing that it was Shao Xuan. Perhaps he felt ashamed by his own action, so he stepped forward again.

"What?" asked Sai, and in his eyes there were still traces of precaution. Before he awakened his totemic power, he was already much taller and stronger than Shao Xuan, yet he got beaten up by him several times, so now with awakened totemic power, he still dared not underestimate him.

"After you awakened, did you notice any changes in your vision? Vision is how you see things... Do you feel any changes, from before?" asked Shao Xuan.

Seeing Shao Xuan was only asking such questions, Sai kept his jaw up high and said with pride, "Sure I do!"

Other kids that Shao Xuan did not know before also joined the discussion, since they overheard Shao Xuan's question. They kept talking about how far they could see in dark situations, and compared with earlier, their hearing, smelling and vision had greatly improved with their totemic powers awakened.

Shao Xuan was the only one who remained silent.

He had to remain silent, or else could he tell the others that all the people he set his eyes on were skeletons?

# Chapter 24 – What’s your name?

---

Translated by Sunyancai

At the end of the ceremony, Shao Xuan felt that something was wrong.

Before he realized it, the totemic patterns on his body were almost complete, he had been staring at the flames inside the fire pit. Since he knew that all the changes on his body were because of the awakened totemic power, he didn’t worry about it anymore. However, ever since he stood by the fire pit, he felt an odd sense of intimacy with the flame inside. He did not know if it was a common feeling for all the kids who were awakening their totemic powers. At that moment it was impossible for him to ask someone in detail, so, he kept staring and studying the flames inside the fire pit.

By the time the Shaman announced the end of the ceremony, Shao Xuan withdrew his attention from the fire pit. He was planning to joke with his “sworn rival” Sai who was standing beside him, he looked at Sai, but to only find a skeleton standing right next to him. Shao Xuan was nearly scared to death, he almost reflexively kicked him away. Looking around, all the people who were walking and the warriors that finished the ancient dance, together with every kid standing around the fire pit turned into skeletons in his eyes. He could no longer recognize who was who.

All the ones talking, walking and swinging their arms and legs, all became skeletons.

Shao Xuan was stupefied.

He did not know if it was just him, or was it the same case with all totemic warriors. Back when he was chatting with Lang Ga and Mai, the only thing he

knew about totemic power was that once the power was awakened, one's body strength and reaction speed would greatly improve. However, he never asked about whether they could see skeletons. Who would have thought of that?

However, now, Sai and the other little warriors did not mention anything about skeletons at all. A minute earlier they were discussing about the meat jerky that was hanging outside the stone room, and never did they mention a thing about bones.

So it seemed that he was the only exception.

He was experiencing the same process of awakening, yet after his totemic power was awakened, it was not the same as everyone else. What if he could only see skeletons from now on?

will he dream only about skeletons, and will the people in his dreams become walking skeletons?

Screw this! He felt terrified even thinking about it.

Shao Xuan scratched his head, he was seeing his arm as bones without flesh at all.

What the Fu\*k!

As for recognizing Sai earlier, it was because he felt familiar with him, since they had fought each other several times in the past. Also Shao Xuan recognized his voice. That little bastard was never shy when he bragged about himself, from the beginning he was in an extreme excitement since he successfully awakened his totemic power. He kept his voice high and sharp, as if fearing that others might not be able to hear him. If it weren't for these two reasons, Shao Xuan could not have recognized him so soon.

The warriors that led them here had already left, while the Shaman and the Chief had not arrived yet. Right now, inside the stone room, there were only those seventy-five kids who just awakened their totemic powers this year. With no supervision, those kids fully liberated their nature, they began to laugh and chat in small groups.

In the eyes of Shao Xuan, they were all skeletons with their mouths opening and closing, and limbs moving around.

Shao Xuan did not join the crowd. Ever since he knew there was something wrong with him, he stepped down to a corner, thinking silently.

He had taken off the pallet, that had his name, from his neck, he remembered that none of the kids standing around the fire pit had worn it. So he tied his pallet on his wrist and stepped inside the room.

He had no feeling of discomfort from his body, and all his hair remained intact, even though there was a ball of fire on his head earlier. Not only this, Shao Xuan felt totally relaxed and comfortable. He felt very energetic, perhaps the reason being that he awakened his totemic power. If he could see something other than skeletons, he would be in a much better mood.

Since he could not figure out the reason for what was happening, Shao Xuan looked around the room. Aside from those over seventy skeletons, there was nothings inside but stones.

Stone table, stone stools, and many stones in different sizes and shapes on the stone table.

In fact, in Shao Xuan's sight it wasn't just only a single colour. Instead, in his sight he could see white, grey and black with different shades. For example, those lad's skeletons were white, while the stones varied from pale grey to dark grey.

Because of fear and respect towards the Shaman and the Chief, those young warriors did not touch those stones on the table. However, they were always free to watch. Next to the long square stone table stood a few kids, they were discussing the ranking of the stones.

"This stone looks fine enough, certainly it could be made into a nice stone knife." A kid said as he pointed at a stone on the table.

"That is okay, I suppose it is close to the mid-level." Another kid took a closer look at it then said. One could tell from his tone that he did not care much about that stone, a mid-level stone did not seem to be special to him. However, when he saw some stones in an irregular shape, he sounded pretty surprised, "This one is good! Perhaps an upper mid-level, unfortunately the shape is irregular, and it can't be made into a knife. It could barely be made into a middle-sized spearhead."



Shao Xuan looked their way and realized that the mid-level stone in their discussion appeared in his sight to be grey, while the upper mid-level one was close to dark grey.

In order to prove whether the theory in his heart was correct, Shao Xuan stood there as he listened to those kids evaluating the ranking of the stones on the table. Those unappreciated stones, the so-called inferior stones appeared to be pale grey in Shao Xuan's sight. While the mid-level stones were grey, and the ones with better quality had darker colour.

In other words, the better the quality of the stone, the darker it would appear to be in this special vision? Shao Xuan thought in his heart.

As the discussion in the stone room went on, the curtain was lifted, and the Shaman walked in with a cane in his hand. Together with Shaman, Chief Ao and two other warriors also came inside, one of the warriors was a woman.

When the curtain was lifted, it immediately became quiet in the room. The ones who were showing off their knowledge a minute ago, immediately became obedient, and they prostrated themselves before the Shaman respectfully.

While he lived near the mountain foot district, Shao Xuan had rarely seen someone give a salute. Normally people in the tribe would only give a salute when seeing someone with a high reputation. However, people living down the mountain were basically nobodies, so normally Shao Xuan did not see anyone giving a salute to other.

However, Shao Xuan knew how to give a proper salute anyway. Aside from showing kids how to count and write, the man in charge of teaching in the orphan cave would also show them how to give a salute. In fact, if you live in the cave, you may not know how to count or write, but you must learn how to give a salute. When meeting the Shaman, those who did not salute were considered disrespectful, and would be despised and rejected by the people in the tribe.

The Shaman guarded the fire pit until the flame shrank to its original size, and then he came to the stone room slightly tired.

Probably, hosting tonight's ritual ceremony, cost him a lot of strength and energy, as the Shaman was being assisted as he came inside. After the end of the ceremony by the fire pit, the Shaman came over and only drunk some water. He had no further knowledge about the little warriors that awakened tonight, and neither had he the chance to take a look at the animal skin roll that had all their information on it. He came to the stone room directly after he caught his breath.

Chief Ao came in together with the Shaman, after glancing around the room, he fixed his eyes on Shao Xuan. The red burning mark had not faded away from his hand, and he did not find the proper time to discuss it with the Shaman.

A warrior moved a stone stool and placed it in the centre of the room, while the female warrior helped the Shaman over to the centre where he sat down.

The Shaman was panting for breath, as he looked at tonight's newly-awakened little warriors dotingly, feeling especially gratified. Every year when he saw the newly-awakened warriors, he would feel irresistible pride.

"Good, very good! You are all going to be the real fierce warriors of our Scorching Horn tribe." the Shaman said slowly.

Being praised and acknowledged by Shaman, all the kids blushed, they could not wait to shout in order to express and vent their excitement.

Looking around, the Shaman asked, "Who is the kid that joined the crew last? Come here and let me have a look at you."

Those who stood in front of Shao Xuan, immediately stepped aside. Other than Shao Xuan, all the kids had spent some time at the Shaman's place. Therefore, they had impressions about each other, Shao Xuan was the only exception that they did not know.

"Ah, it's you. Come closer and let me have a look at you." the Shaman looked at Shao Xuan and said.

Shao Xuan stepped forward and stood in front of the Shaman. He was curious about what this old shaman might say, would he mention Caesar? Did he feel guilty about ignoring him for nearly a year? Didn't he know how difficult it was to keep a wolf?

Shao Xuan gazed at the old skeleton sitting on that stone stool, and the Shaman stared at Shao Xuan attentively as well. He asked in the same benevolent and gratified way, “You. What’s your name?”

Shao Xuan was speechless for a moment. Apparently, this old shaman did not recognize him.

# Chapter 25 – Source of Power

---

Translated by Sunyancai

“My name is Xuan.”

Shao Xuan shared his name in this life. He now could only see skeletons, so he could no longer analyse the Shaman’s facial expression. However, seeing that the Shaman’s skull hesitated at his name, as if recalling something, Shao Xuan knew that this old shaman probably did not recognize him, anyway.

After some time, the Shaman spoke again, but this time he did not ask anything else about Shao Xuan.

“Fine. Now stand with your companions.”

Shao Xuan said no more, and even though he showed no dissatisfaction on his face, he was curling his lips in his mind already. Was it true that this old shaman was too old to remember things?

“Okay, since all of you have awakened your totemic powers, and gained the strength coming along with it. So, the first thing you should master now, is how to use such strength.” the Shaman said with no hurry.

“This is a turning point in your life. After today, you will be regarded a real totemic warrior. However, this is also a fresh new beginning for all of you. You can only rely on yourselves when it comes to how far you can reach in your lives. Never be complacent, for you are the only one to decide whether you stay in the primary stage, or continue to grow and develop, just like the other excellent warriors in our tribe.”

As the Shaman was saying this, he looked at Chief Ao’s direction, as if saying

that, look, your Chief is a fine example of that.

Being the Chief in the tribe, Ao's ability was indeed outstanding, and he could best most of the warriors in the tribe. Because of the worship to strength, many newly-awakened totemic warriors would consider Ao as an idol. And this year's newly-awakened totemic warriors were no exception.

"As totemic warriors, you should first know how to find the source of power inside your bodies."

That was also the main reason why the Shaman kept those little warriors for tonight.

"The source of power exists in your bloodline. It is asleep when you are young, until someday when the time is right, it gradually awakens under the summon of the flames... Now, close your eyes and clear your minds. Follow the power inside your bodies, and naturally you will see it..."

No one knew when but it became warmer inside the stone room. Everyone sat down on the ground, and closed their eyes under the Shaman's command.

Shao Xuan did the same.

When his mind was cleared, he realized that in the sea of his consciousness there was gradually a pattern forming. It was two horns covered in flames, the totem of the tribe. Aside from that, there was also a thing in the shape of an egg, wrapping the totem inside with a dazzling white light.

In the shape of an egg...

"I saw it!" a kid could not suppress his excitement and opened his eyes.

"It's the totem!" said another kid.

"I've seen it, too!"

"So did I!"

"..."

Almost all the kids claimed one after another, as if being afraid to be treated as a moron who could not see the source of power by the Shaman. None of them wanted to be considered as some stupid totemic warrior with no

potential.

The Shaman looked around, and realized that most of the kids could find their sources of power, except for...

“Ah-Xuan, have you found yours?”

As the Shaman spoke, all the other kids fixed their attention on Shao Xuan.

Earlier when they were chatting with each other, they had heard from Sai that this kid named Xuan came from the orphan cave down the mountain, and he would only be ten years old after the Snow Festival. Normally, only a small number of kids in the tribe could awaken their totemic powers at such a young age, and most of them were descendants from powerful totemic warriors that lived up near the mountaintop. There was a saying spread among the tribe, that the earlier one awakened his totemic power, the more potential he would have. And hence he would have more chance than others to become a great warrior like the Chief.

Before, when winter was not over yet and they got chosen and kept by the Shaman, the youngest kid among them was the first grandson of the Chief, “Mao”.

The hunting weapon that Chief Ao usually used was a spear, which was also known as “Mao” in local language. Numerous beasts got killed by Ao’s spear, and the spear represented the countless glorious deeds of Ao, as was known to many people in the tribe. And according to the tradition passed along in the tribe, it meant a lot since Chief Ao named his first grandson the same name as the weapon he used. Obviously he had great hopes placed on this grandson.

However, apparently during this year’s sacrificial ceremony, the one in the center of the limelight was not Mao, who was considered as the one with greatest potential by the public. Instead, it was Shao Xuan, who got noticed during the middle of the ceremony like a black horse.

Mao made a sour face all the time, especially when he looked at Shao Xuan. In his eyes there were obvious traces of provocation, and he was anxious to start a fight with him.

Unfortunately, Shao Xuan could only see people as skeletons, so he could not see his expression at all. As for the provoking look that Mao kept for so long, it completely went to waste as if it was a look tossed to a blind person.

At the Shaman's question, Mao stared at Shao Xuan as well, expecting him to say no, so that Shao Xuan would definitely receive the mock from everyone in the room.

Too bad, but Shao Xuan did not fulfill their wishes.

Shao Xuan nodded at Shaman's words, "I've seen it, too. It's just the same as the totem that appeared above the fire pit."

The Shaman was satisfied, since all the kids found their source of power. So he continued to ingrain them with knowledge about the source of the flame.

While Shao Xuan closed his eyes, and continued to look at the egg in his mind.

Since no one else mentioned something aside from the totem, so it meant that that white "egg" was only existing in Shao Xuan's mind. Based on that shape, Shao Xuan couldn't help but think about the odd stone that he picked up from his last life, the one that could not be scratched with a knife and could not be heated up by fire.

The more he looked at it, the more it looked like the stone from his previous life.

If it's true, then he found the reason why he was experiencing a different process of awakening compared with the others.

Speaking of using the totemic power, the Shaman asked Mao to demonstrate for the kids.

"Give a punch without using totemic power."

Another warrior took out a previously prepared slate under the command of the Shaman.

Mao stood out with pride. Seeing his own grandfather Ao, the Chief of the tribe looking at him with encouragement, Mao took a deep breath, made a fist, and stood in the right position. He roared as he punched against the slate in front of him with his clenched fist.

Bang!

A dull thud.

The slate shook slightly.

Mao frowned a little and pulled back his fist.

Shao Xuan could nearly feel his pain, but looking at Mao's fist, Shao Xuan noticed that he was not injured, only a red mark was left on his hand.

That was exactly the difference of the body's strength after awakening the totemic power. From flesh to bones, every inch of one's body got strengthened.

"Okay, now do it again, but this time with the totemic power," the Shaman said.

Mao stopped frowning, he looked much more relaxed.

On his face, totemic patterns appeared, as he punched again.

With the same gesture and as it seemed, the same strength. It felt all the same, yet it felt completely different somehow at the same time.

Bang!

The slate got punched and broke into pieces.

Those little warriors instantly got excited and they wanted to have a try for themselves. However, the Shaman did not intend to take out more slates. Instead, he asked them to do silent practice in their minds, in order to get familiar with how to use the totemic power.

After delivering the lecture, the Shaman took the men and left, for now he had to get some rest. Seeing the exhausted Shaman, Ao took another look at his red palm. Thinking it over a bit, he decided to discuss it tomorrow.

The Shaman was assisted back into his stone room. With an animal fur blanket on his body, he opened a roll of animal skin by the fire light. He told someone to make a record of today's ritual ceremony, in which there were all detailed information about every kid. It had all things written down, like who got awakened first and who completed the awakening first.

In the animal skin roll, there was also information about Shao Xuan, including



his birth and his current living situations.

Seeing that Shao Xuan kept a wolf, the Shaman searched his memory hard.

Ofcourse! No wonder he felt a sense of familiarity when he heard the name “Xuan”.

Back then, when he was walking around the mountain foot district to see how the people’s lives were, he did not expect to hear anything about “keeping and breeding”. So when he met Shao Xuan with the little wolf, he left a patterned plate so that no one in the tribe would harm the little wolf. Originally he planned to provide an extra portion of food to Xuan. However, after he got back to the mountaintop district, he was told that a certain kind of plant he had been searching for a long time was found, and a hunting team brought back one plant alive. So he devoted all his thoughts and energy to the research, and he had been working on that plant for nearly a year. Finally, he found out a way of grinding it into a herb. When the prescription was finalized, he completely forgot about the little wolf that he asked Shao Xuan to keep.

He wondered how the little wolf was now...

While at that time, Caesar, who eventually got remembered by the Shaman, was just squatting outside the orphan cave pathetically. With icy winds at night, he stared at the mountaintop, and howled.

# Chapter 26 – Incomplete Flame

---

Translated by Sunyancai

The next day, one by one, the little warriors woke up as they immersed themselves in practicing the totemic power.

After a night's practicing, most of them could skillfully use the totemic power in their bodies.

Through that night, Shao Xuan had also gained a lot. After getting familiar with how to use totemic power, he tried the same way to deal with that “egg” shrouding the totem. It turned out that the method worked!

When using the totemic power, the shining light on that “egg” would fade slightly, while when using the power of the “egg”, the totem would be covered by the dazzling light of it totally. However, no matter which kind of power Shao Xuan used, the totem was always being shrouded in the egg, and that was something that could not be changed.

Even though he could not switch the powers in the blink of an eye, but at least with sufficient time, Shao Xuan could use those two powers freely. As a result, when Shao Xuan opened up his eyes again, he didn't see anymore skeletons.

Seeing the familiar world again made Shao Xuan more than thrilled. It would've been so creepy if he could only see skeletons from now on. Luckily he still got to see the varied colorful world filled with life and vitality.

Smoothing that major problem out, Shao Xuan felt pretty relieved. Then, he saw some familiar faces, the kids from the orphan cave, Mo-Er, Sai, and some other kids that he had met before.

It was good to see their facial expressions, for a vision filled with only skeletons was so dull and dreary.

This time, Shao Xuan finally could see Mao's glare. However, even though he could see that now, he ignored it after a single glance.

Mao felt very angry for being ignored by Shao Xuan like that. He wanted to have a "nice chat" with him, but then the Shaman came inside, so Mao could only keep his hatred to himself, for no one dared to be presumptuous in front of the Shaman.

The Shaman asked how they felt, and after he made sure there was nothing abnormal, he said that they will be excused to leave. As for the other things, they could only try to adjust themselves during later hunting missions. The master initiated the apprentices, but they could only sharpen their skills through their own efforts. Even if they had the same starting point, warriors from the same awakening year could be in totally different levels as time went by. No one could become a great warrior only by bragging.

In fact, Shao Xuan respected and admired the old shaman a lot. Even the kids living in the orphan cave, who had experienced starvation and coldness, and became ferocious, they never grumbled against heaven or laid the blame upon other people. They also had no twisted minds or thoughts. After awakening their totemic powers, they were great warriors with a positive attitude and hopes for a better future. The Shaman had the credit for most of that.

If we say that the Chief managed the material life in the tribe, then the Shaman would be in charge of the spiritual life in the tribe. The Shaman's duty was heavy and important!

Not far from the stone room, some people were waiting there for those newly-awakened warriors. Among which Shao Xuan noticed a familiar figure. Actually, it was hard not to notice him, for he seemed to stand out a lot with that giant boar head. That was the proud wimpy kid with the excessive boar head as his decoration!

Mao also noticed him, and the anger in his face immediately faded away, as he walked towards that direction with a smile.

"Have you become a totemic warrior, big brother?" The kid with that boar

head asked.

“Of course! Hey, look, who am I?” Mao looked even more proud.

They turned out to be brothers, no wonder Shao Xuan felt familiar when he saw Mao earlier.

Those little warriors left one by one. Shao Xuan intended to leave, but unexpectedly, he was stopped by the Shaman.

“Wait a second, Ah-Xuan.”

The Shaman came towards him and passed him a patterned plate, “You did a good job keeping Caesar. In the future, you may approach me if you have any trouble.”

Early in the morning, the Shaman had already asked about the recent situation of Caesar, and the general happenings and events of Shao Xuan during the past year. In fact, the fish thing did not raised much attention in the mountaintop, and since the Shaman had been working on the plant and herb, he did not pay much attention as well. Only this morning, did he know a thing or two about people down the mountain. However, the Shaman was much more interested in Caesar than in the fish. He knew that he was negligent, and he wanted to make amends since the kid had done such a good job keeping Caesar.

Shao Xuan had tied the previous patterned plate from the Shaman around Caesar’s neck, so this time the Shaman gave Shao Xuan another one.

The Shaman also promised to have some food delivered to Shao Xuan, once he had his own house built. Shao Xuan did not decline his kindness, and he left after expressing his thanks.

After Shao Xuan had left, Chief Ao approached the Shaman and showed him the burnt palm of his, as he shared the story from last night.

The Shaman thought about it for some time. Suddenly he realized something, and he asked Ao to enter the room so they could be alone.

“Your story actually reminded me of something. It’s said that the original

Flame would cause such circumstances.” the Shaman said slowly.

“You are saying that...” Ao was very much astonished.

Since the Shaman mentioned the “original” Flame, being the Chief of the tribe, Ao understood the meaning behind that phrase.

Besides the first settlers who came here, only generations of Chiefs and Shamans knew that the Flame in the tribe was incomplete.

The so-called “The Flame harmed no one” theory, only meant that when the flying flames melted into one’s body, it wouldn’t harm them. However, for the others, it was different. After all, the source of power in everyone’s body was the same, but the power itself varied from person to person. When being awakened, naturally the power would protect oneself and exclude the others.

The Flame’s fire would not harm dead things, yet it would do a lot of damage to the living. Anyone other than the people in the tribe would get badly burnt by the fire. Ao was someone in the tribe, so normally speaking, the Flame that awakened the source of Power was the same. And since it was the tribe’s Flame, the rejection was not severe. What’s more, Ao had a tough body in the first place, so he was lucky for only getting a red mark instead of being injured.

Also, that night, those night swallows flying out there, did not dare enter the residential area of the tribe.

If they did, they would be severely injured, or even burnt to death if they were touched by the spreading Flame.

Also, it was the reason why Ge suggested Shao Xuan to leave Caesar in the cave, instead of taking him up to the mountaintop.

However, this fire ,that protected your own but excluded the others, was not that obvious since it was incomplete.

“Then... when the Flame is complete, will the awakening process be like Ah-Xuan’s case and one’s whole body becomes covered in fire?” Ao was surprised.

“Highly likely...we shall keep this thing as a secret for now, and no other person shall know about it. Let’s discuss this when I find some answers in the ancient animal skin rolls.” The Shaman said seriously.

Ao nodded at his words, for he knew that it could not be resolved in a short period of time. And it didn't matter as long as it was not a bad thing. As for when the other people in the tribe would ask about it, Ao planned to tell them that it was only because Shao Xuan was awakening his totemic power.

Shao Xuan, who was walking down the mountain, did not know that his way of awakening with the Flame had something to do with the complete Flame. And since the Chief and the Shaman both did not ask the details about last night, Shao Xuan would definitely not tell the secret. Instead, he continued to play his role as a newly-awakened boy.

When he stretched his body, Shao Xuan could hear the cracking of his bones. It was not the stiff sound made after a long time's sitting. On the contrary, he felt the joy that his body was filled with strength and energy.

The depression that had long existed in his heart for being in a complete alien world, also faded away, and he felt that his steps got lighter as he walked. Standing on the mountaintop and looking afar, at the vast mountains in the horizon, a sense of pride rose up in his chest.

Since he could not go back to his world, he decided to live well in this world.

Shao Xuan swung his arms and quickened his steps. With one slight leap he covered a long distance. In the comfort of running, he experienced the joy and cheer that fully differed from yesterday.

All said that after awakening the totemic power, one would run with the speed of a bird, and strike with the strength of a beast. It was not boasting at all. Even if Shao Xuan could not do the same now, it was not impossible to achieve in the future.

# Chapter 27 – One day we will host a Potlatch

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Even before Shao Xuan went down the mountain, people in the mountain foot district were already discussing Shao Xuan's awakening. No one expected that this young, weak little kid from the orphan cave would be able to awaken his totemic power yesterday!

Since he awakened his totemic power at such a young age, people assumed him to be full of potential and that perhaps, he would turn into a strong totemic warrior.

Also, people were wondering why Shao Xuan had awakened his totemic power so early. Some said that it was because Shao Xuan went out to exercise every morning, just like kids up in the mountain, that he could awaken his totemic power so early.

There were also some people that speculated it was because of the fish, because no other such thing had ever happened in the mountain foot district, so why now had Shao Xuan existed as an exception? However, that theory got refuted as soon as it appeared. Their own kids had eaten plenty of fish since they began fishing themselves, and some of them were one year older than Shao Xuan. If fish were the reason for his awakening, then why didn't they awaken their totemic power?

So, in the end, people boiled down the reason of Shao Xuan's early awakening to the fact that he went out to practice and exercise every morning. More and more people were convinced of that as time went by.

Hence, when Shao Xuan finally came down the mountain, he noticed that

most of the kids who used to sleep all day, were now being woken up by their parents and had to go out to help move stones or go fishing with them.

Shao Xuan only knew why after he asked someone. Surely, working was also one kind of practice and exercise.

Shao Xuan did not argue with the early-practicing theory, as of course he wouldn't share the real reason with them.

Children in the cave did not go out fishing today. With Shao Xuan's absence, Caesar refused to work and dig up stone worms anymore. Even if they had the fishing tools, they could not capture any fish without the bait. There were too many people in the gravel yard, so the kids couldn't dig up stone worms for they would constantly be crowded out.

Caesar, on the other hand, never moved his ass from the entrance of the cave. He just squatted there, ignoring all the kids' persuasion. Even when some kid reluctantly gave him half of a raw fish, he did not look at it and instead kept staring at the mountaintop.

Upon seeing Shao Xuan return, Caesar was immediately elated and rushed towards Shao Xuan at the first sight of him. If Shao Xuan had not awakened the totemic power and become much stronger, he perhaps would literally have been pinned down by Caesar.

All the kids in the cave were counting on his return, so Shao Xuan took Caesar to the gravel yard and they dug out many stone worms. After a winter's hibernation, almost all the stone worms returned to the surface of the ground, resulting in a big harvest.

Since he had awakened his totemic power, Shao Xuan would go on hunting missions with his new team, making it impossible for him to be in charge of the orphan cave. After discussing with Ge, Shao Xuan left Tu and Ba to manage the cave together. Tu could count well, and his memorization ability was also outstanding. He was much more brave now and he could talk fluently. The only weakness about him was that he still seemed weak and slim. Ba on the other hand, was not outstanding in all those aspects, but his figure was strong enough. No one would be his rival once he got seriously angry. So it was reasonable that these two guys were in charge together.



After handling the stuff in the cave, Shao Xuan saw Lang Ga approach with a bright smile.

“Good lad! You impressed us all for awakening so early! I thought you’d have to wait for another two years or more!” Lang Ga was quite thrilled. Shao Xuan had asked Lang Ga before about whether he could join their hunting team after he awakened his totemic power, back in the days when they were chatting. Mai did not refuse Shao Xuan then, and in fact Mai had helped Shao Xuan after that, so it seemed that Mai was also optimistic about Shao Xuan.

At first, when they attended the ritual ceremony, they felt it was a shame that Shao Xuan was still too young. However, no one expected that Shao Xuan would give them such a big surprise last night.

Becoming a totemic warrior meant that he could own his own independent house, and Lang Ga was just here to help him with that.

Lang Ga and a few warriors from the same hunting team were having a barbecue party together, and were discussing the first upcoming hunting mission of the year. When Lang Ga heard Shao Xuan had left the Shaman’s place, he came to find him and drag him to their house to meet his future teammates.

There were six people in Lang Ga’s wooden house. They were all very young, and one of them had only awakened last year. However, he was already thirteen years old when he had awakened and he had grown a lot over the last year, so he now seemed much bigger than Shao Xuan in size.

Knowing that these people would be his future teammates, Shao Xuan also greeted them warmly with enthusiasm.

“Don’t worry about the house. We will cut some wood and help you build it the first thing tomorrow.” The young man named Ang told Shao Xuan.

At first, Shao Xuan assumed that he could only have his own independent house after two or three years. However, he unexpectedly could have it in such a short time.

Normally, people like Sai, who had their own families, would stay with their family even after they had awakened. However, for someone like Shao Xuan,

who came from the orphan cave, they basically had to ask their friends to help build a house.

Since he was already here, Lang Ga did not plan to let Shao Xuan leave quite so soon, and instead wanted to keep Shao Xuan here at their barbecue party. Since the whole winter had passed, the meat they preserved was not fresh anymore even though Lang Ga and his friends preferred fresh meat. It didn't matter anyway, as they would have their first hunting trip of the year very soon. So several people brought the meat they still had in their homes, with the thought that they would get more fresh meat after they had eaten up the old.

As they were eating and chatting, Ang suddenly mentioned the widespread word in the tribe – Potlatch.

That was only a legend.

It's said that there was someone in the tribe that once held a Potlatch. A Potlatch was a feast that was considered the winner of a contest between hosts to see who could feed their invited guests the most. As for the definition of "most"; there lay the interesting part. They had to feed the guests until they got so full, that they would wobble over the grass and vomit somewhere. After they threw up all the food in their bellies, guests would return to the feast and continue to eat, until they felt like they could throw up again, at least a few times, only then could the feast be considered as a successful one.

That kind of feast was the so-called Potlatch.

So based on Lang Ga's description, Shao Xuan knew that the Potlatch aimed at giving out or even destroying more food and property than one's competitors. Some people would even destroy their food and clothes in front of the public, and sometimes they would even burn their houses down to the ground, to build up their prestige in the tribe and humiliate their competitors. One who did that would gain the long-term admiration from his followers.

Whoever was able to do that, would be someone with considerable power and status, who was ambitious in seizing even higher power.

That was arrogant enough, conceited enough, and idiotic enough.

Then Shao Xuan noticed Lang Ga and his friends' facial expressions when they talked about the Potlatch. There was a kind of undisguised admiration. As if they wanted to kneel before the host of a Potlatch if ever he showed his face here.

Seeing Shao Xuan's astonishment, Lang Ga acted like an elder and claimed that, "you don't understand it yet."

Yes, Shao Xuan did not understand it. In his eyes, only a total moron would do such deeds and how could he be admired and respected by warriors like Lang Ga?

No, it should be said that all people in the tribe admired such deeds deeply!

Thinking that in his previous life, people would only feel honored if there were leftovers when they treated their guests, Shao Xuan finally began to understand a little. As it turned out that the tradition came from the earliest generations of men. However, that was such severe waste of things!

He had underestimated the obsession that people here had towards food. They had such unique pursuit of the concept of food.

In the past, Shao Xuan had heard a lot of discussions between the kids in the cave, about which warrior had defeated what kind of ferocious beast. Those heroes were worshiped a lot in the past, and their glorious deeds were remembered and passed on to the new generations.

However, now Shao Xuan was informed that there was another even more glorious deed.

Originally, to get followers, one did not need to beat up people, use lies, no need to lobby, or persuade, or sweeten the deal. And all plans to outwit someone were unnecessary. All that needed to be done was to host a Potlatch, and then numerous people would want to become your followers.

Shao Xuan felt that his values of life had been distorted.

Looking up at those two crescent moons in the sky, Shao Xuan sighed, "I shall be a moron someday in the future!"

"What did you say?" Lang Ga did not understand Shao Xuan's meaning.

“Nothing. I said that, if possible, one day we shall host a Potlatch ourselves!” Shao Xuan said.

Lang Ga and his companions laughed out, and Lang Ga, having the most laughter, tapped on Shao Xuan’s shoulder. After he stopped laughing, he even praised Shao Xuan, “That’s the spirit!”

In the eyes of Lang Ga and Mai, what Shao Xuan just said was merely some childish talk after hearing a legend and they did not consider it seriously. After all, they had never seen a Potlatch held during their lifetime. Neither had their parents or their grandparents. None of them had seen a real one.

Was the legend true or not? Even the Shaman and the chief could not tell.

Perhaps Lang Ga felt that it was not appropriate to keep on discussing the Potlatch, and he changed the subject, for he wanted to show off more in front of Shao Xuan.

“You know...What is the most intimate partner of ours since we were born?” asked Lang Ga.

Shao Xuan sat still, looked down, and thought about it for a bit. Then he raised his head, and stared at Lang Ga meaningfully, as he said tentatively, “Our left hand?”

Lang Ga was speechless, “...”

# Chapter 28 – I want to learn stone crafting

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Lang Ga choked.

At first Lang Ga had guessed a few possible answers that Shao Xuan might come up with, and he planned to judge and guide him in detail no matter which answer he had. Just the same as every time in the past when there was someone newly joined the hunting team. However, Lang Ga did not expect Shao Xuan to have such an implausible answer and to go way off script.

What did one's left hand have anything to do with it?

But Lang Ga did not overthink it, instead, he just corrected it with a serious face, "It's stone!"

"You should know that a long time ago, when we first started a life here, we were just living in the cave. Stone was something that we saw and touched every day. It could keep us sheltered, and help us to cut and chop wood."

As he spoke, Lang Ga's face turned even more serious, and he seemed quite emotional with his fists clenched, "In the meantime, we also used those stones. We could pierce those ferocious beasts through with stones, and smash their heads with stones! Even when we were in danger, stones would also be the thing that accompanied us by our side, until our last breath."

Providing shelter; accompanying by one's side; never to betray nor to abandon. People in the tribe had been dealing with stones from their births. They played with stones, and used stones in their daily life, almost all tools and appliances were made from stones. As for warriors who often went out for hunting missions, they could not be more familiar with stones, and they could

never be separated from stoneware. So no wonder Lang Ga said all that.

Certainly, Shao Xuan preferred to call the stones as tools, after all stones had no life.

“Now, you know what is supposed to be our most intimate partner, right?” Lang Ga stared at Shao Xuan and asked again. His expression indicated that this time he would not accept any wrong answer.

Shao Xuan nodded pretty seriously and earnestly, “It’s stone!”

“Ha, you got it right this time!” Lang Ga showed a satisfied smile immediately, and then continued on the topic of hunting.

“Oh, Ah-Xuan, now since you just got awakened this year, you are not allowed to participate in the first hunting mission of this year. Perhaps you would also miss the second one as well. As for the third hunting mission, you are the only one who could decide whether you could join us or not. It’s all up to your ability.” Said Lang Ga.

Hmm? Was there such a thing? Shao Xuan was not aware of that.

Seeing Shao Xuan’s curiosity, Lang Ga explained, “You just awakened, so you and the other newly awakened totemic warriors may be rough in using your powers and strength. You have to go through some training first.”

Lang Ga even put it mildly, but Shao Xuan could speculate the reason hidden in his words.

One reason for keeping those newly awakened kids from hunting missions was for safety concern. When spring finally came with blossoms and warmth after a whole winter, a lot of ferocious beasts became active again in the mountains and almost all of them were starved. There would be more poisonous snakes wandering around and the forest would be filled with different kinds of crisis. With no protection along the way, newly awakened kids would easily get killed in the mountain forests. No one in the tribe would like to see that happen.

However, the second reason was because the newly awakened warriors like Shao Xuan had not achieved some certain level of ability. Hunting teams valued team-working a lot. Therefore, someone with no guaranteed personal abilities

would be a heavy liability to the team, who could bring no help but instead appeared to be a burden.

“Understood!” Shao Xuan did not feel disappointed when he had thought things through. Also, he felt that he should have his foundation properly built first. It’s not a bad thing that he could have the time to practice more.

Lang Ga was relieved with Shao Xuan’s reaction, originally he thought that Shao Xuan might be disappointed or reluctant as the other kids, and he did not expect him to have cleared the dots so soon. When he asked Shao Xuan to come to the party and meet his future teammates, he also planned to tell Shao Xuan about the first two hunting missions. In the past, many newly awakened warriors would make a scene when they were told that they were not allowed to join the first two hunting missions after they had become fully excited about the hunting. When those circumstances happened, in most cases, the kids’ parents would discipline them with a few slaps on the face. After that, they would behave much better. However, Shao Xuan came from orphan cave and both his parents had died long before. What’s more, he appeared to be much more emaciated than the other kids, so Lang Ga was worried that perhaps he would hurt him if he had to give Shao Xuan a few slaps.

“Good! I’m glad that you can think it through. By the way, I have a few fine stone cores here. I’ll give them to you, you may craft them yourself, or just go and find a stoneware crafter.”

Lang Ga took out a few stones in different sizes from his animal skin bag, those were the stone cores that Lang Ga mentioned earlier.

The materials to make stoneware could be obtained after hitting and forging the stones, and people in the tribe would call those stone cores.

After giving the stone cores to Shao Xuan, Lang Ga shared some training experiences with him as well. The others at the party did not hold back their experiences either, they did not have that kind of thought in their minds.

Shao Xuan kept their advices in mind silently, and then sincerely thanked them for the sharing.

“Your father used to help me when he was alive.” Lang Ga said. People in hunting teams were just like that, each of them was willing to lend a hand to

others when possible. Even though they could not help Shao Xuan a lot on his training, their advices could make it easier anyway.

After having some grilled meat, Shao Xuan excused himself from the party, he had other things that needed to be done. While Lang Ga and the others kept on discussing about the coming hunting mission in five days.

Shao Xuan was called to stop, not long after he had come out from Lang Ga's house.

“Are you Xuan?”

Shao Xuan looked at the voice's direction and saw a kid older than himself. He looked the same age as Sai, but much stronger. The animal skin clothes on him seemed to be of good quality, Shao Xuan assumed that he wasn't someone from the mountain foot district. Instead, he seemed more like someone living in the mountain side or mountaintop district. Shao Xuan had some memory of him, they were awakened at the same ritual ceremony, but Shao Xuan did not know his name yet.

At the same time, the kid raised his head high, and seemed pretty proud, and he was measuring Shao Xuan with his eyes.

Standing on a high ground and keeping his chin up, didn't his eyes feel tired? Shao Xuan glimpsed at him and asked, “Who are you?”

At first, Shao Xuan thought that he would stand on his dignity and answer with something like “It doesn't matter who I am” to keep the appearances. However, the kid answered directly, “My name is Fei. After five days, I will be joining the hunting team to attend the first mission of this year. I bet you still have to wait for a long time before you can tag along, right?”

After his declaration, he sneered at Shao Xuan and then jumped up high above Shao Xuan's head. When he landed with his tip toes, he soon jumped up again. After a few leaps, he had already placed himself in front of Lang Ga's door. Apparently he had something to discuss with Lang Ga.

The kid also snorted at Shao Xuan as he looked back when he was about to enter the room, displaying his pride of his moves. His moves earlier were quite



impressive among his peers, his father often complimented him for being able to run faster, jump higher and leap further than the other kids.

Shao Xuan scratched his jaw, was it really okay for him to tag along with the hunting team, since he made such a big noise when landing?

However, since Fei could come with the hunting team for the first hunting mission of the year, obviously he was under someone's protection. What's more, his protector must be someone with a high reputation and status, because, some normal warriors like Lang Ga could never have a saying in this kind of things.

Surely he was spoiled, with all the protection he got.

However, Shao Xuan was not affected by that, and his emotion were also not affected by Fei's attitude. After all, he was not really a little kid, and he understood the importance of gradual progress. Therefore, he was not that eager to succeed. The earlier incident might influence others, but Shao Xuan did not care that much.

Shao Xuan took Caesar for fishing. After an entire winter's rest, the fish in the river were still as stupid and dumb as earlier. They did not release once they took the bait, and so they got captured easily. They might look ferocious, but they were not intelligent at all.

From Lang Ga and the other warriors' earlier discussion over hunting skills, Shao Xuan learnt that many beasts in the forests were just like the piranhas in the river. They might look ferocious, with sharp teeth and big mouth. But once you found the trick, they could be captured easily. However, some other animals might seem to be gentle and weak, they dieted on plants and had no sharp teeth. But instead, they could easily kill you in silence, and they were no less aggressive than many predators.

Since it's not the world that Shao Xuan was familiar with, he thought that he should get as much preparations as he could get.

With the fish and some pieces of old animal skins, Shao Xuan asked someone to help him make an animal skin bag. He paid the manual fee with one fish, and then went to the stoneware crafter, Ke's place with the other three fish. Now Shao Xuan had more strength than before, so he could easily lift four big fish

without Caesar's help.

When Shao Xuan arrived, some men were just leaving Ke's house with finished stoneware in their hands, for example, stone knives, spearheads and stone adzes.

Those people were here to trade stoneware, since the hunting season had begun, and they had to store more tools for hunting missions. Ke was considered as a famous stoneware crafter among the mountain foot district, naturally more people tended to come to his place. If Ke had a better temper, he would for sure have gained more customers than now. Every year, Ke would drive away some people who wanted to do the trading with him, just because of his bad temper.

Some people said that Ke was behaving too straight-forwarded. Instead of keeping it gentle, he tended to blast things outright in others' faces as he talked. However, Shao Xuan did not agree with that. Was Ke really that ignorant of things? Or did he have a straight-forwarded character? He didn't think so.

Shao Xuan lifted the curtain and walked inside after he got Ke's permission.

Ke was working on a stoneware. Most of the stoneware he made during winter had been traded out, and there were still some stone cores and food piled up in his room. They were the "processing fee" that he did not have the time to put away.

Placing the fish by the pile of food, Shao Xuan approached Ke.

"Uncle Ke, I want to learn how to craft stoneware."

Last time when Shao Xuan was here to learn, Ke refused him because he said it was not the right time yet, and he had to wait until his totemic power awakened.

Now since Shao Xuan was awakened, he decided to have another shot at this. Also, according to Lang Ga and the others' advice in training, he needed a lot of stone tools. Shao Xuan did not have enough food to trade for so much stoneware, so he planned to craft them by himself.

Ke stopped his work at hand, and measured Shao Xuan closely from head to toes. And then he gazed straight at Shao Xuan's eyes.

Shao Xuan did not avoid his eyesight.

After a few seconds, Ke passed Shao Xuan a stone hammer and pointed to somewhere not far, where a stone core was placed. On that stone core there were a few lines, curved and meandering.

“Hit along the lines.” Ke said.

As a rookie Shao Xuan held the stone hammer, he looked at Ke and then glimpsed at the stone core placed there, before he swung the hammer and hit down.

The first strike was too cautious. He did hit the lines, but because of limited strength, it only left a slight dent on the stone core.

Again!

For the second strike, he hit it too hard, so he pierced down a stone chip instead of a flake of stone. Also it went beyond the line.

Shao Xuan could tell from Ke’s exposed veins by his forehead, that Ke was extremely unsatisfied with his earlier two strikes. But since Ke kept his silence, Shao Xuan continued hitting on the stone core along the lines. Also, he struck boldly, and he did not become timid because of the first two failures.

Peeling down certain amount of stone flakes from a stone core was not as easy as it seemed to be. Stoneware crafters needed to estimate the length of time when the hammer should hit the stone based on different materials when he made the stoneware. Also, the angle and speed were also very important. Should the hit be straight or curved? What’s the hammer’s quality and the stone’s? How much strength should be used? There were many aspects that needed to be given serious consideration before one strikes the stone core.

Ke had mentioned these all to Shao Xuan, and Shao Xuan had seen a lot when Ke was peeling stone flakes from the stone cores. However, when he got to do it himself, he knew that it was extremely difficult!

A small discrepancy could lead to a major error.

Again!!

As Shao Xuan hit the stone core one strike after another, Ke sat aside and

watched him in silence.

Caesar was squatting beside Shao Xuan. He looked up at Shao Xuan and then looked at Ke and his poker face. Finally, Caesar decided to move his legs, one bit after another, until he had drawn back to the corner and then he lied down to stay with the fish.

# Chapter 29 – Artistic crafting skills

---

Translated by Sunyancai

At first, Shao Xuan would check on Ke's reaction every time when he hit the stone. But after some time, he completely ignored Ke's gaze, and immersed himself into hitting and carving.

The process of hitting was very labour-intensive, both physically and mentally. It was not as easy as a swing of a hand and an arm. For every single strike, he had to calculate a lot regarding the angle and strength. Things like how to swing the hammer and where should the hammer land, needed to be decided in the blink of an eye.

For many people in the tribe, perhaps after they gained enough experience in hitting the stones, they could achieve the best result based on their feelings. However, since Shao Xuan was still merely a novice, it was impossible for him to have the experience that old stoneware crafters gained from hitting for dozens of years. He could only rely on the calculation and estimation he had in mind, and then try his best to better and improve his striking.

Even though he now had a much stronger body with greater strength, the strength he had was not inexhaustible. At the beginning, he did not find it hard to hold the stone hammer. However, with more and more strikes, fatigue piled up, he felt that the hammer in his hand became increasingly heavy. However, at that time, every single strike became essential. At this point, hitting the stone core with the wrong strength or angle, the stone flakes and chips could be more or less than expected, therefore, it could create more wasted materials than before.

Because of this, Shao Xuan did not have the energy and spirit to pay attention

to Ke's reactions.

At first, Shao Xuan would hesitate for a few seconds between each two strikes, because Shao Xuan needed time to think about the disadvantages of his former strike, so that he could better his next strike. However, with more and more practice, Shao Xuan felt something in his mind and he became much more skilled on hitting. therefore, the time between strikes was shortened.

He did not know how many strikes he had made, but Shao Xuan felt that he was on the verge of collapsing. However, Ke did not allow him to stop, instead, he would point out the mistakes that he did during his hitting. It was just like when someone was running the marathon, the runner was about to collapse and wanted to stop for a rest, but someone from the back would urge him on to continue.

Knowing Ke's temper, Shao Xuan was fully aware that if he stopped now, he will not be able to learn the stone crafting skills from Ke in the future. So, regardless of how tired he was, he had to pull it together and continue.

When he felt that the last trace of strength in his body got pulled out, he suddenly felt relaxed and alleviated as he kept on striking. He thought, perhaps it was the feeling of breaking through your limits?

What Shao Xuan did not know was that when he felt relaxed and refueled with power, totemic patterns had showed up on his face.

Without notice, he had used his totemic power. However, since all his attention was fixed on striking, he did not have extra attention to mind the totem lighting up in his mind.

Traces of surprise showed up in Ke's eyes as he was sitting aside. Among all those years after he had become a stoneware crafter, many people had come to him to learn stone crafting skills. However, very few of them would use totemic power in the process of crafting. Some people thought that totemic power was sacred, which could only be used in sacred things like hunting missions or when defending the tribe, and other more 'sacred' things, even though some people did not have such opinions, it was very difficult for them to control totemic power so precisely. Only experienced warriors were able to do that.

However, for kids at Shao Xuan's age, or young warriors like Lang Ga, very few of them could control their totemic power at such a level. Once they used their totemic power, it was more likely for them to smash the stone core into pieces, which is more destruction than processing. Some guys who were impatient and hot-tempered would just quit.

That was so fucking strenuous! I could have used that time for practicing hunting skills!

Just because of that, Ke was quite astonished, because Shao Xuan did not only use totemic power and not destroy the stone core directly, the stone flakes he peeled off were even in better shapes and condition! Almost every stone flake he peeled away could be processed further into something else, instead of becoming waste stone materials.

This was quite rare!

However, Shao Xuan was not aware of his "rareness". Instead, he was immersed into striking, all he had in mind was the experience he gained from each strike, and then he focused on his next move, so that he missed the astonished expression on Ke's face that lasted for a few minutes.

Normally, Ke had no expressions on his face, even in front of some old friends, he would not express such astonishment when talking with them. It was quite rare for him to show that look.

Shao Xuan only stopped after he had finished hitting the stone core on all the lines.

Glimpsing at the ground around the stone core, Shao Xuan noticed that stone flakes had piled up beside, and some of them were just lying on the ground here and there.

Then he looked at Ke, but Ke still had no expression on his face.

Shao Xuan dropped the stone hammer as he breathed heavily by the side. He waited for Ke's commend and at the same time, he thought that it was really

difficult to be a stoneware crafter!

No wonder that only a small part of wounded totemic warriors would become stoneware crafters, even when they could not go hunting anymore. Others who crafted stoneware were only doing it for their own use, or for their kids' practice. Aside from that, they would do other things in their daily life. For example, Ge was in charge of food delivery to the orphan cave. So they would not treat stone crafting as a profession that they could earn a living from. Therefore, their crafting skills were absolutely not as good as professional stoneware crafters as Ke.

Ke had already calmed himself down and hid his astonished look. He looked just as he usually does, and he was sitting at the same place where he was from the very beginning. But, he took a long thin wood stick and began to dig into the pile of stone flakes and chips. His hand flicked slightly and the end of the stick picked out a sharp-pointed stone flake. The sharp-pointed stone flake got lifted up and after it drew a parabola in the air, it fell into a wooden box filled with many stone flakes that waited to be further processed. The stone flakes and chips that got peeled away could be made into different kinds of stoneware like scrapers, cones, or arrowheads based on their different shapes.

Even though there were a lot of stone flakes and chips that got peeled away from the stone core, Ke was pretty fast in picking them out and throwing them into the box. Shao Xuan stared at those stone flakes flying from the ground into the stone box like beads. He was dazzled.

Before Shao Xuan could take a few long breaths, Ke had finished picking.

After dropping the wood stick, Ke said with no facial expression, "Waste."

Shao Xuan's eyelid twitched as he heard him, but he soon realized that the "waste" was not referring to him, but the stones on the ground which could not be further processed. Those were considered as waste materials.

Obviously, Ke was not satisfied with the quantity of the waste stone flakes that Shao Xuan created.

"I planned to make a stone ball. But judging from it, now it could only be



made into a stone adze.” Ke looked at the stone core that was peeled in despise, and this time he said a long sentence.

Shao Xuan felt relieved. At first he was worried that perhaps Ke would not take him in as an apprentice. But since Ke said that, it meant that Ke did not mind teaching him.

“Bring it over here.” Ke pointed at the stone core that Shao Xuan hit.

Shao Xuan dropped the stone hammer in a hurry, and carried that ugly stone core to Ke and placed it onto the stone chopping block in front of Ke.

“Watch closely.”

Ke grabbed the stone hammer that Shao Xuan used earlier, and picked up the stone core, which was two times wider than his hand, with one single hand. He carried the stone core tightly as he watched it closely.

Shao Xuan heard the screaming of wind and saw the shadows of the hammer.

“Ding!”

The hammer created a ringing sound as it landed on the stone core.

At the same time, a stone flake was peeled away from the stone core.

The flying stone flake did not hit the ground directly, instead, it fell into a wooden box hanging on the wall.

The swing was fast, as if the hammer knew exactly where it should land, and which part of the stone should be peeled away. It was not like Shao Xuan’s bracing himself when he was hitting. On the contrary, it felt pretty casual and relaxed, and it handled complicated matters with ease.

That was the real “peeling the stone flakes”, unlike Shao Xuan earlier, who was merely hitting the stone, and most of the stone flakes he created were waste materials.

After one strike, Ke did not provide too much time for Shao Xuan to think about it, the second and third and fourth strike soon followed...

The shadows of the hammer were connected with one another, and the ringing sounds became more and more dense. With quicker strikes, Shao Xuan

felt that the sounds had become a whole and he could barely distinguish the different strikes.

At the same time, the stone flakes that were peeled away, flew into the wood box one after another. At first look, it was like a rainbow connecting the stone core and the box.

Shao Xuan was completely stunned; he had known earlier that Ke was a skillful stoneware crafter. However, he did not realize that he still had been underestimating this old stoneware crafter. Who could imagine that he had such artificial crafting skills!

This was no longer peeling away stone flakes anymore. That was making sliced noodles!!

Obviously, when Shao Xuan was watching Ke's work before, he did not see his real skills. The things that he had seen earlier were barely a small part of it, and it was far from what he was really capable of.

So delicate and so accurate!

When Shao Xuan came back to his senses, Ke was already finished with the peeling and the stone core left in his hand was already in the shape of a stone adze.

After drilling and polishing. The tool was complete by installing a wooden handle.

It was perfect.

"Take it." Ke passed the completed stone adze to Shao Xuan.

"For me?" Shao Xuan took over the stone adze. When he looked up at Ke again, he found that Ke was already doing something else, so he swung a few times with the stone adze.

He had helped in processing the stone adze, he felt proud even though his technique was rough and unsightly, and he almost ruined the stone core, but after all it was Shao Xuan's first time in seriously crafting a stone tool. Also, it allowed Shao Xuan a chance to witness the true artificial crafting skills of Ke. Of course it meant a lot to him.

The stonecore that made the adze was fine and smooth in its texture, thick and very hard. Although it was not obvious by just looking, one could easily feel its weight when holding it in the hand. The stone was better than average, Shao Xuan did not expect Ke to give it to him as a gift, just like that.

“Peeling stone flakes is hard. When you want a satisfying result, even the simplest strike could take a lot of time to practice. There’s no shortcut in this. You have to anticipate every stone flake’s peeling, and then think about speed, weight, strength and consequences, and then combine them with the natural quality of the stone. The best strength and angle, along with many things that could turn a rough stone core into fine stoneware were difficult to describe. You can only work on them by yourself. How to use your strength, which angle to use, and how to hit the stone... You may only acquire those skills by numerous times of practicing.”

Yes, stoneware, unlike ironware, could not be restored once the strike was made. You cannot turn back time. With one hammer strike, you could only make it or lose it. You can only set the tune with one beat of the gong.

Shao Xuan took the stone adze and respectfully gave a salute to Ke, “Yes, I get it.”

“However,” Ke switched his tone, and pointed at those few dead fish along with Caesar in the corner, “you also need to know the importance of comprehending. You are allowed to fail, but you have to learn from your mistakes, instead of behaving like those stupid fish!”

“Understood.” Shao Xuan knew what Ke was talking about.

Ke indicated that Shao Xuan should not be as simple-minded as those piranhas with no memory of failures. They kept making the same mistakes and they did not turn back even when they were killed.

“Take one fish with you” Ke said. telling Shao Xuan to go.

“Okay.”

Since Ke told Shao Xuan to take a fish home, Shao Xuan would have no space to reject. So he said no more and asked Caesar to leave together, with a fish and a stone adze in his hands.

Taking the fish and walking out from Ke's house, Shao Xuan recalled Ke's words as he stared at the fish in his hand. He couldn't help but poke the fish's head with his stone adze, "So stupid!"

The fish remained silent, as if saying, "So it's all my fault, now?"

# Chapter 30 – Ke's Gift

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Early the next morning, Lang Ga and the others came to the orphan cave for Shao Xuan.

The timber was already prepared, and all Shao Xuan needed to do was to name the place that he had in mind. Once the place was chosen, they would begin the building.

Shao Xuan was familiar with the mountain foot area, and based on his current condition, it would not be possible for him to build a house at mountain hill district. He would only bring trouble for himself.

As for the place to build the house, Shao Xuan had some place chosen in his mind long before he was awakened. Although the place was a little remote, it had a perfect view. One could see the situation up in the mountain as well as a view of mountain foot district. You could even see the orphan cave from there.

Lang Ga and his friends were quite familiar with building wooden cabins, so only after half a day, the cabin was built. After finishing some details, one could live in it directly.

Since it was Shao Xuan's first cabin of his own, it was just a small one which took up about forty square meters. It looked just fine, and Shao Xuan could totally do the expanding later by himself. But for now, at least he had his own place. In general, Shao Xuan was pretty satisfied with the cabin.

Lang Ga originally planned to chop up the leftover timber into firewood, but he was stopped by Shao Xuan. Instead, Shao Xuan asked him to help build a simple wooden bed. Some people in the tribe preferred sleeping on stone beds,

and some liked sleeping on haystacks. There were also some people that chose to build a bed with wood, and Shao Xuan certainly was one of them.

After covering it with clean and dry animal furs, it looked much more comfortable than Shao Xuan's former haystack back in the cave.

"Ah-Xuan!"

Shao Xuan looked up at that voice and he saw the middle-aged woman called Yi. Yi had not awakened her totemic powers, so she lived in the mountain foot district. Normally she would do some sewing for people to earn a living. She was kind so Shao Xuan often approached her to make animal skin bags. Yesterday Shao Xuan had asked Yi to sew an animal skin bag at the cost of one fish. He explained the style of the animal skin bag in detail, and supposed that it could take more than one day to finish the sewing. However, unexpectedly, Yi had come so soon.

"Aunt Ah-Yi, is the work done?" Shao Xuan asked with a smile.

"Yes. It was not that hard."

Yi passed him the bag. She did not stay, for she had other work to do.

"Why do you need this animal skin bag?" Lang Ga asked as he kept chopping the wood.

"For training, of course." Shao Xuan did not explain much, but he took the animal skin bag and placed it inside the room. He had not tried it yet, so he did not know if it could be of use or not.

Lang Ga and his friends had not that much of curiosity, and they continued to do the final decoration of the cabin.

When it was almost done, Shao Xuan asked Lang Ga and the others to stay for lunch.

Aside from fish, there were some tubers and fruits, and some plants provided by Lang Ga and the others.

The two young warriors living in the mountain side district were pretty interested in the fish. However, they did not have much time for fishing, since they needed to prepare the stoneware, do the training, and get things ready for

the next hunting missions. Also they were in no lack of food, so neither of them had gone fishing.

“You should each take a fish with you when you leave. I have plenty of them anyway.” Shao Xuan was not bragging, for yesterday afternoon he returned to the cave and went out with the other kids to fish by the riverside. Usually, as long as he had the time and there were no abnormal signs by the river, he would go fishing. Capturing fish was quite simple, since all the piranhas were so stupid and simple-minded. What’s more, to hunt, Shao Xuan would need his teammates’ help after he joined the hunting team. Compared to the future help, a few fish were absolutely no big deal.

The young warriors were a little embarrassed, but seeing that Shao Xuan really didn’t care, they accepted his offer, and thought about chopping down more timber to reinforce Shao Xuan’s cabin later.

As they were eating, Ge came with a big stone crock on his shoulder.

“Old Ke asked me to deliver this to you as a gift, in celebration of having your own place. You can store food or water inside.” Ge put down the stone crock and looked around the nearly-completed cabin, “Not bad! I planned to help here, but it seems that I can save the strength now.”

Shao Xuan curled his lips at his words. ‘Why would you come at this late hour if you really planned to help?’

Lang Ga and the others also figured that Ge was just saying things, but out of the respect for the old warrior, none of them had said a word about it.

“Hey, is this stone crock for Ah-Xuan?” Lang Ga asked something obviously apparent, just to change a subject.

“Yes. Old Ke made it for Ah-Xuan especially.” As Ge explained, he emphasized “Old Ke” and “especially” while looking at Shao Xuan constantly.

From Ge’s understanding of Old Ke, the old fellow must have been very satisfied with Shao Xuan. In the past, Old Ke had also planned to take in some apprentices and teach them seriously, however, it was such a shame that none of the kids were good enough. They were either too impatient, or too

indecisive. Some did not even dare to swing the hammer once they were dealing with some fine stone cores. Old Ke directly drove them away and he never spoke to them again. Many would say that Old Ke was too harsh on the others, however, the fact was, he was merely too disappointed.

Yet, after such a long time, Ke had finally found a satisfying apprentice. But he kept his poker face up all day long. If he drove Shao Xuan away this time, how could he find a better person to inherit his skills? Even Ge felt anxious about the situation for him.

In fact, the very night that Shao Xuan had awakened, Ke asked Ge to find a proper big stone after the ritual ceremony was over. He worked for two nights and made this stone crock.

This crock was almost the same size as the one that Ge used to deliver food to the orphan cave every day. However, this one was a much better workmanship. The edge of the stone crock was nearly the same thickness, and the inner side of the crock was polished very smoothly. While on the outside, not only was it polished properly, it was vividly carved with some pictures and patterns as well, including natural scenery, birds, and animals. There were some animals that Shao Xuan had not seen before, Ke had probably seen them when he went out for hunting in the past.

Normally, Ke focused more on a stoneware's practical use, and seldom decorated it with art. Now, seeing the stone crock he made for Shao Xuan, one could understand how much he valued him.

"This is such a nice stone crock!" Lang Ga and the others said with admiration as they surrounded the stone crock.

Even though all of them valued the practical use more, and a stone crock was no big deal, who wouldn't like better looking stoneware?

Not only was the stone crock large in size, with patterns carved on it, but it also had a matching stone cover. Usually, many families would cover their stone crock with animal skins, straw mats, or with a piece of stone plate. Rarely did they have a cover that especially matched the crock. Even the two young warriors that lived in the mountainside district had no such cover back in their homes.



“Indeed! What a nice crock! I have lived for all these years, yet the stone crock in my house is not as good as this one.” Ge added.

“This Ke you’re talking about... Is he the one who used to be famous for setting traps?” Ang asked, he had come to Shao Xuan’s place with Lang Ga.

“Yes, that’s the one.” Lang Ga nodded.

“I heard that many people used to learn the crafting skills from Ke, but later on...” Ang did not finish his story.

“Later on what?”

“Later on, all apprentices that followed Ke for his skills, were either pushed away by his bad temper, or were driven away by force from him. Gradually, no one approached him to learn anymore, and Ke moved down to the mountain foot district, where he now lives.”

Ke was indeed very famous in the tribe, but now he was rarely spoken of by others.

“Old Ke is very skillful. He is harsh, but you can learn useful stuff from him.” Ge told Shao Xuan seriously, which was quite rare.

“Oh, are you learning from Ke now, Ah-Xuan? Hang in there! Ke really was awesome back in his day!”

Lang Ga, in order to encourage Shao Xuan, shared his own story of when he was learning to set ground bows from his grandfather. Back then, his grandfather rained down curses on his head like hell. Not only was he being yelled at, but he also got beaten up sometimes. Lang Ga’s grandfather was an excellent warrior, and Lang Ga could never escape from his grandfather’s hands.

Other kids would mock him every time they saw him get beat up. At that time Lang Ga felt very ashamed of himself, and secretly blamed his grandfather for everything. However, as time went by, and Lang Ga became a real warrior, he finally realized his grandfather’s care and thought.

When they were hunting in the forest, ground bows were not considered as direct-killing weapons, however, they were critical to the mission as well. Just

because of the fact that Lang Ga was quite skillful in setting ground traps, he was quickly accepted by the hunting team. And every time when food was distributed, Lang Ga would get quite a big part of it. At least he was getting more food than the others with a similar level.

“Mastering more skills means that you will have a smoother road than the others. It’s not only about your position within a hunting team. If I may say some unlucky words, once you get wounded and lose an arm or a leg, like old Ke and me, you will no longer be able to join any hunting missions in the future. With more skills, you can live an easier life in the tribe and keep yourself away from starvation.” Said Ge.

So, Lang Ga and Ge both agreed on the theory that you should keep it going even when being yelled at like hell. You should grasp the opportunity and try to learn as much as possible. It’s best to absorb all your master’s skills! Not to mention that Ke had a lot of good stuff to teach. There was so much to learn!

At their words, Shao Xuan nodded solemnly, “I know what you are talking about. When you want to learn things from someone, you must acquire many qualities, and having no sense of shame must be the most important quality of yours.”

Lang Ga and Ge both couldn’t agree more, “Exactly!”

# Chapter 31 – Simple and crude

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Of course Shao Xuan would like to learn old Ke's skills, not only his skills in stone crafting, but also his skills in setting up traps, which were quite useful when hunting outside. It was just too early for him, who had no foundation in training. What Shao Xuan could do now, was start with simple striking and prepare to learn more advanced skills later on.

In fact, Shao Xuan understood old Ke's attitude towards him. A long time ago, old Ke had started to help him, however, sometimes old Ke said something that could easily be misunderstood by others. Take yesterday for example, when he approached old Ke to learn crafting skills, he merely got an evaluation of "waste" after he peeled off the stone flakes. Others would have misunderstood old Ke if they did not know him as well as Shao Xuan did. Luckily, Shao Xuan had a quick mind and knew what old Ke was referring to after some thinking.

Seeing that Shao Xuan had no rejection to their theories, Ge was relieved immediately. When he left, he planned to drop by old Ke's place to brag about his deeds, and perhaps get something as a reward from old Ke.

After finishing helping Shao Xuan with his cabin, Lang Ga and the others left, for they had a lot of preparations that needed to be completed before the hunt. After all, the first hunting mission of the year was just around the corner, and, as was the same for every hunting mission, warriors had to risk their lives. Preparations were the only guarantee for their safe return.

There were two hunting groups in the tribe, and they took turns going out for hunting missions. While one group was out, the other would be on duty rotations within the tribe and maintaining the security of the tribe. After all,

there were still so many ferocious beasts in the mountains, and just as many many sick or elderly people in the tribe.

Among every hunting group, there were two hunting teams. According to Lang Ga's description, warriors were distributed into two hunting teams based on their personal abilities. The first hunting team was formed by warriors living in the mountain side district and above, and the second was formed by warriors that lived in the mountain side district and below.

Lang Ga and his friends belonged to the second hunting team, and naturally, Shao Xuan would join them when he goes out for hunting missions.

After Lang Ga and the others had left, Shao Xuan took a look at the newly built cabin.

Caesar was wandering around the cabin curiously.

"I'll toss you out if you dare to poop inside." Said Shao Xuan.

When they lived back in the cave, Shao Xuan had trained Caesar to go pooping at the special place where all the kids did their pooping. Here, Caesar had to strictly go outside to excrete his waste.

"In the future we'll be living here. We'll make a wooden desk, and chairs, and stools, and ..."

After lying down on the bed for a rest, Shao Xuan took out the animal skin bag that Yi had delivered this morning. He then went out and filled it with some sand and crushed stones, before weighing it with his hands.

Shao Xuan used the heavy smashed stones, tossed away after crafting stoneware, as the gravel to fill his bag. There were a lot that were thrown away at the gravel place, piled up like small hills. The stones were not suitable or attractive to stone worms, so stone worms were rarely found there. Hence, not many people would go there either.

Shao Xuan had thought about that place when Lang Ga was talking about load training. So he asked someone to sew him the animal skin bag in a special shape. It weighed about one hundred kilo when filled up with the smashed stones.

Shao Xuan had once wondered if those stones were metal ore. However, after serious observation, he realized that the stones were just like other stones in the gravel yard, except for the fact that they weighed more.

Of course, Shao Xuan wanted to have some ironware, however, not only did he know nothing about forging and puddling, he also had a bigger, more important issue. In this world, there were many things that differed from his last life, including the strange stones, so he could not judge things the same way he used to. Because of that, instead of spending time researching, Shao Xuan preferred to deal with the problems he had at hand and decided to forget about forging and ironware for now.

He tied a few animal skin bags onto his arms and legs and, after he was all set, moved a little. He found that he was still quite agile and could carry another stone.

It seemed that the body strength of a totemic warrior was really good.

So, he began to combine the load training with his daily life.

Even though for now, Shao Xuan could not carry a thousand kilogram thing like Ge, he could lift a few hundred kilo's easily. If Shao Xuan were still in his last life, he never could have dreamt about this kind of strength.

As Shao Xuan was trying out the animal skin bag, he noticed that Caesar was facing the outside and baring his teeth. Shao Xuan untied and put down the animal skin bags. As soon as he finished doing so, he heard someone calling his name.

"Is Ah-Xuan around?"

The people coming were two tall and strong warriors, who seemed young, around the same age as Lang Ga. Muscles covered their bodies and their voices were rough, with a heroic sense.

"My name is Tuo, and this is Keke. The Shaman asked me to bring you something." Said Tuo

Tuo was obviously more mature than Lang Ga, and although he sized up Shao Xuan with his eyes, he had no intention of harming him. There were even traces of a faint smile on his face.

The Shaman kept his promise that, on the very first day of Shao Xuan having his own place, he would have someone bring up food, as compensation for him.

There was a lot of meat, all of it had been processed, and some of it was already preserved. Along with the meat, there were some tubers, plants, and fresh fruits.

Besides food, there were two packs of mixed herbs. Shao Xuan was familiar with one of them, they were used for normal diseases, since he used them back in the caves and knew how to apply them. The other pack of herbs, as Tuo explained, were used for traumatic bleeding.

As for the other person that came, Shao Xuan figured that he was someone restless judging from his name. Also, Tuo said that the Shaman asked him to bring up something. He mentioned “me” instead of “us”. So apparently Keke was not here under the Shaman’s command.

Keke had been staring at Caesar from the minute he entered the room. Since he was facing Shao Xuan with his back, Shao Xuan could not see the expression on his face. However, according to Caesar’s reaction, Keke could not be looking very friendly towards him. Warriors who had been hunting forever would see any animal as game and would gladly pierce them through with a spear.

Caesar’s body tensed up, nearly baring his teeth, preparing to fight.

“Hey! A wolf can actually develop like this!” said Keke.

Just when Shao Xuan was wondering whether the warrior was despising Caesar for being so timid, and not ferocious like wolves in the wild, Shao Xuan heard Keke smack his lips while saying, “It’s worthy to be eaten after another half a year!”

Caesar bared his four sharp teeth towards the warrior immediately. He looked quite alarmed, and growling sounds could be heard in his throat. He was sending a warning, as if he would rush towards him to bite the next second.

“Okay!” the warrior took out a stone knife he had at his wrist, and said with enthusiasm.

Tuo was explaining the usage of the mixed herbs as he heard Keke. The muscles on his face froze for a second, and then twitched twice heavily. He immediately dropped the things and rushed towards Keke like a gust of wind. He punched Keke as he was standing off against Caesar with his stone knife.

“Fuck you! Put your knife away!!”

Keke got punched and flew out the window directly. With a loud bang, he fell on the ground outside.

Shao Xuan was totally speechless. Indeed, the totemic warriors acted simple and crude.

After that, Tuo returned to Shao Xuan and explained, “He’s just like that. Every time he sees a beast, he would lose his mind out of excitement. Don’t worry, he was just acting out of habit. Trust me, he did not mean it.” After all, they dared not to kill a wolf with a patterned plate from the Shaman.

However, just when he finished his sentence, Keke came inside again as if nothing happened and he had not been punched in the face. This time, he walked towards Caesar again without a knife. However, he rubbed his fingers and obviously he had no good intention as well.

Tuo was running out of options. When the Shaman asked him to deliver something here, he did not expect to meet Keke on the way. Once Keke heard that Tuo was going to the newly-awakened totemic warrior that surprised everyone during the ritual ceremony, he immediately got excited and insisted to tag along.

At first Tuo wanted to chat more with this little warrior that was so valued by the Shaman. However, based on the current circumstances, Tuo regretted for letting Keke to tag along. Perhaps he would fight the wolf for real if they stayed. Such a young wolf would be easily killed by Keke’s single punch. What if Keke killed the wolf? They would be yelled at by the Shaman.

Shao Xuan sensed a shadow flash in front of him, and the next second, he saw Tuo appeared behind Keke. He grabbed Keke’s head with his arms as he dragged him out. In the meantime, Tuo looked back at Shao Xuan, “We’ll leave since the thing is already delivered. We’ll have plenty of time for chatting when you go for hunting missions with us in the future.”

After they had left, Caesar relaxed, too. He sniffed around, and began to drag an animal bag out, it was the one brought in by Keke. It looked like Caesar wanted to toss it out.

Shao Xuan hurriedly stopped him. Because inside the bag there were some dried fruits. Shao Xuan had not tried many of them. So it would be a big waste if Caesar just threw it out.

As Shao Xuan was sorting things out, he recalled Tuo's words earlier. The last sentence meant that they were in the same hunting groups as Shao Xuan. However, Lang Ga had never spoken of these two people while they talked.

Were they from the first team?



# Chapter 32 – Glory Road

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Early the next morning, Shao Xuan tied those animal skin bags, filled with gravel, to himself, and headed to the training ground with Caesar.

In the past when Shao Xuan had not awakened yet, he would often feel worried about being hurt, or even being killed by mistake if he did not pay enough attention to the surroundings. Now he was much more emboldened because his body could endure more damage or wounds.

People in the tribe did not know many moves or forms. All they could do was imagine the existence of a certain game and react based on its habits.

Some warrior would just treat the cliff as some kind of animal, and then hit the cliff hard and strong. Because of that, one should not be surprised when seeing a gust of wind carrying sand and stones in the mountain. That was merely some warrior practicing his punches.

Just like Shao Xuan saw at the Shaman's place the other night, kids like Mao could break normal stone plates.

After Shao Xuan arrived at the training ground, he picked out a mountain and began to run from the mountain foot to the top with stones carried on his shoulder. While running, he could see which part of the mountain consisted of fine stones, so that he could go dig or carve them out.

"Fortunately I have such a special ability." Shao Xuan said as he saw the different shades' of grey in his sight.

Compared with totemic power, the other ability in his body had no doubt

helped him save a lot more time and effort.

Shao Xuan could not punch out mid-level or mid-upper-level stones. His hands would be the ones hurting if he punched the stones with his bare hands.

After carving out the stone he had chosen, Shao Xuan looked up in the sky and realized it was almost noon. Shao Xuan carried the stone and headed back. He ate lunch back in his place, and then headed for old Ke's house with the stone he carved out in the morning.

Shao Xuan had arranged every afternoon for learning stone crafting.

The stoneware might look simple, but it was more than just hitting on them.

"First of all, you need to know how to identify the different qualities of the stones. Even with the same hardness, the way of striking could be different when it comes to different stone cores." Old Ke said as he took out two stone cores of the same grade.

Shao Xuan saw that old Ke directly carved off stone flakes from one stone core, while he processed another with heat and cold. Old Ke explained the changes of color, and the cooling time of quite a few different kinds of stones to Shao Xuan in detail.

Some stones would change their color and quality after being heated up, while some stones would only change the quality. Some of the stones would not have any reaction during the process of heating. Sometimes temperature must be strictly controlled when heating up stones. One needed to know when was the best time for carving and at what temperature the carving wasn't suitable. As for the temperature, one could only rely on their feelings and experiences, since there was no sophisticated instrument that could be used for measuring.

For instance, old Ke could tell which stone core was hotter with a single touch, when the difference seemed to be undetectable for Shao Xuan.

Different stones had different reactions on temperature so they have to be heated up with different periods of time. Also the cooling times and their reactions all varied.

Old Ke took one of the two stone cores earlier and started to heat it up above

the fire. He held a stone stick in each hand and used the sticks to hold the stone core in the middle.

The fire burnt strongly as if it was trying to dry the surrounding people. One would be sweaty after just a short time by the fire. On old Ke's face there were lots of sweat stains, but his hands were quite steady, and he was quick and nimble when he turned the stone core.

About half an hour later, the stone core above the fire turned from pale gray to brownish red. Then old Ke took it away from fire. However, he did not start the carving right away, but waited until it cooled down so that the brownish red faded to some extent.

The stone flakes that were carved away, were in almost the same thickness, regardless of their shape!

What kind of crafting ability could achieve that?!

At least in the conception of Shao Xuan from his former life, that could not be realized without advanced cutting machine.

The so called "Ideal crafting" was an extremely complicated process, and people who did not follow this path would never be able to imagine it.

Practice came right after the theory. Shao Xuan had been practicing carving off stone flakes for most of the afternoon.

"There's so much waste. Do it again!"

"What the hell are you carving off? Do it again!"

"Bad control on your strength as you swing the hammer! Do it again!"

"Hold it! Who taught you to carve this kind of stone directly? Have you had too much fish?! Heat it up before you do it again!!"

...

Old Ke's neighbors all realized that recently old Ke became more hot-tempered. They all sighed and shook their heads when they talked about Shao Xuan, "Such a poor boy, Ah-Xuan!"

In fact, the situation inside the room was not as miserable as people imagined.

Old Ke had a vicious mouth, but he was very patient when teaching Shao Xuan his skills. Also, he was never stingy with stone cores.

For a single afternoon, Shao Xuan had used five stone cores. Aside from the one that he brought, the other four all came from old Ke's own stash. They were all of fine quality, so Shao Xuan even felt a little extravagant that he used such fine stones for practicing. Although old Ke didn't mind it, but Shao Xuan himself felt a little ashamed.

Every day when he returned from old Ke's place to his own cabin, Shao Xuan would feel sourness and stabbing pain all over his body. The pain in his muscles grew more and more intense, and it was hard for him just to set up a stone pot and light the fire. Especially the part between his thumb and index finger hurt even more with burning pain. He tried a few times before he could successfully set up the pot.

Something good must be thoroughly tempered. Shao Xuan felt that it was not the stone cores that got hammered, but himself. However, at night he slept safe and sound. And after a night's recover, he would feel refreshed in the morning, as if the pain in the muscles was nothing but an illusion.

He did not know whether it was because of the totemic power, or because of the other ability in his body.

Early the next morning, Shao Xuan planned to go to the training ground like normal. Yesterday he had found a place where there were quite a few fine stones. He could carve some stone cores out for practicing, so that old Ke could save his own. He would hate to waste too many of old Ke's stones.

As he was walking, Shao Xuan realized that there was something irregular. People were not so active normally, but this morning, almost all of them got up early, and they were moving in the same direction.

After thinking for a bit, Shao Xuan suddenly tapped on his forehead.

He almost forgot that today was the day that Lang Ga and the others went out for the hunting mission!

Shao Xuan changed his direction and joined the stream of people together with Caesar.

There was a path from the mountain foot to the mountaintop, which was almost a straight up path. It was higher than the other places in the surroundings and no one would build a house there. Hunting teams would walk on that path when they took off, as well as when they returned, so they would not interfere the other residents of the tribe.

As time went by, the path was given another special meaning. People in the tribe called it the “Glory Road”.

The tribesmen had complicated emotions as if they were seeing troops off before they went to war. Pride, gloom, and hope. They did now know whether their families would remain intact when the hunting team returned. They did not know whether their families would bring back enough food when the hunting team returned.

Most of the people gathering along Glory Road were relatives of the warriors that were going on the mission. And they varied from kids to elderly. When the hunting team returns, the same people would gather here again to greet them back. Of course they would have different feelings that time.

However, aside from seeing off and welcoming back the hunting teams, to those warriors in the hunting team, there was another meaning for this path. That was a confirmation and acknowledgement of their personal strength. If Shao Xuan could summarize based on his understanding, the path would be a “Pride Road” to many of the warriors.

After the end of a hunting mission, it was absolutely clear who gets how much food. It was like an open chart for one’s processions. The wealthy people would have no lack of reputation, status and women. Those were all worthy of flaunting.

“Here they come!” someone shouted out.

Shao Xuan looked at that direction.

There were about two hundred people walking down the mountain. At the very front was the leader of the hunting team that Shao Xuan recognized from

the ritual ceremony that night. Not only the leader, Shao Xuan had seen the ones following him before. They were dancing by the fire pit.

All people walking down the mountain had a feeling of generals at war, regardless of their expressions. Some were smiling and some were quite serious.

At the rear of the team among all tall and strong warriors, those few kids with limited height were pretty obvious and easily noticed. The Chief's first grandson, Mao, was also among them. Fei, who had showed off his ability in front of Shao Xuan was also in the team.

"Hey, who are those kids?"

"They surely are strong and skillful since they can go on the first hunting mission."

"Those are the top warriors from the newly-awakened warriors this year."

"Hey, is that Mao? He deserves to be the first grandson of our Chief!"

...

People were discussing heatedly.

Sai's father pointed out Fei and other kids in the troops and said to Sai, "Look for yourself! You are almost the same age, and you awakened with them in the same year. Now they are in the first hunting mission already, and you? Where are you now?"

Sai apparently was not convinced by his father's judgement, "I can do the same if you lived up in the mountain!"

Sai's father immediately was speechless, and he slapped his son's face without any more words.

# Chapter 33 – The length of a finger

---

Translated by Sunyancai

People in the tribe resumed the usual pace of life after the hunting team had left.

However, compared to last year, it was quite different with the bustling by the riverside. After experiencing the initial fear of the unknown creatures in the river, people began to tend to be less afraid of water creatures because of the benefits brought by the big-mouthed piranhas.

It turned out that the creatures in the river were not so dreadful. One could capture enough food as long as one stayed careful.

Kids in the orphan cave lived a stable life under the management of Tu and Ba. Every day they would go fishing, and with the food provided by the tribe, had grown much stronger than before. They also became more and more united as time went by. They had to be united, for each and every single person's capacity was limited after all, so they had to act as a unit in order to be dominant when fishing.

As for stone worms, Shao Xuan would take Caesar to dig some up every two days, after which he asked the kids in the orphan cave to store them for later use.

However, stones could never trap stone worms. Someone had tried to store stone worms within a stone jar, only to discover the jar broken and the stone worm gone the next day. However, Tu made an important discovery from this accident. Wooden jars and straw ropes could trap the worms better than stoneware. Even though the stone worms could not be kept for a long time,

they could definitely be trapped for one or two days, preventing Shao Xuan from having to go to the orphan cave every day.

It soon became routine for Shao Xuan to search for stone cores at the training ground in the mornings, and, in the afternoons, go to old Ke's place to learn crafting skills.

Over ten days passed, and Shao Xuan felt that he had much more strength than when he had newly-awakened. He became more skilled in controlling his totemic power, and could switch the two kinds of powers inside him more freely.

It seemed that learning stone crafting skills had many benefits to mastering totemic power.

Shao Xuan went through the woods like a nimble monkey, heading towards the place he had chosen yesterday. As his figure went by, the branches shook slightly, as if blown by a slight breeze.

Caesar ran behind him.

Being still within the range of the area guarded by warriors from the tribe, Shao Xuan did not worry about the presence of some ferocious beasts, yet controlled his sound on purpose in preparation of future hunting missions. On many occasions, warriors were required to move in silence as they had to approach the game quietly and hide their presence. A slightly larger noise could easily disturb the beast they were after, or draw some other fierce beast's attention.

Shao Xuan had seen Lang Ga and Mai move in silence and knew that both of them, especially Mai, could move without a single sound. He still had a long way to go compared to them.

In the several mountains of the training grounds, Shao Xuan saw many newly-awakened kid like himself, including Sai.

"Hey, is that Ah-Xuan?" Sai's father questioned, watching the figure flash by. For normal people, Shao Xuan was very fast and hard to see, but for an experienced warrior who had been awakened for a long time, he could be spotted easily.



Sai was constantly jumping with a giant stone in his hands and had jumped over a hundred times already. By the time he looked in the direction his father was looking, Shao Xuan had already disappeared.

“What are you looking at? Continue jumping!” Sai’s father hit him on the butt with a stone stick and yelled, “You are worse than Ah-Xuan, who is two years younger than you!”

“Why do you say that?” Sai was obviously not convinced.

“Hey, how dare you talk back at me? It’s what I say it is! Now continue to jump and you may only rest when you’ve jumped two hundred times!” Sai’s father hit him twice more with the stick as he spoke.

“I’m already at a hundred and seventy two!” Sai had calculated in his mind and knew he only had to jump another twenty-eight times. He was happy about that and wondered whether to hunt for flying stone squirrels, or to find some snacks. He wondered whether he could still find that green fruit that tasted crispy the other day.

Sai swallowed his saliva as he thought, but suddenly he heard his father shout again, “Do you take me for a fool who could never calculate correctly? You’ve only done hundred and twenty-seven! You have to jump another seventy-three times!”

Sai was so angry that he nearly tossed that giant stone away. However, his father was like that. He was never wrong, so Sai had to admit defeat no matter what. He would get beaten up by his father if he argued.

Fuck!

Sai could not blame his dad, so he blamed Shao Xuan instead, planning to vent his anger later.

Shao Xuan, on the other hand, was not aware that he was hated again, and kept looking for fine stones as usual. There were a lot of stones in the training grounds, but those that could be used to craft into stoneware were quite rare. Even when he relied on his special ability to sort out different levels of stones, it still took him a lot of time to find acceptable ones. This was because sometimes, even fine stones might not be suitable for carving. Every morning, Shao Xuan

would spend a few hours selecting stones, after which he would take back those which had fine quality and were suitable for carving.

After these days of learning from old Ke, Shao Xuan had made big progress in identifying different stones. He no longer saw all the stones at the same level as he had in the past.

When Shao Xuan was looking for stone cores, Caesar would dig holes in the mountain or catch flying stone squirrels out of boredom. So every time Shao Xuan finished selecting stone cores, he would find a few dead flying stone squirrels lying beside Caesar's feet.

Sometimes, Shao Xuan would feel sorry for Caesar. He was a wolf, yet he was kept by Shao Xuan in that way.

In the afternoon, Shao Xuan went to old Ke's place with the selected stone cores.

Old Ke taught Shao Xuan how to determine the best striking angles and striking surfaces of a stone, and which kind of stone was suitable for being crafted into which kind of stoneware. Then, old Ke watched as Shao Xuan carved off stone flakes while he sat beside him.

Shao Xuan took a hammer and started striking and carving after he took off his animal skin jacket and became topless.

For the first few days, Shao Xuan's animal skin jacket was soaked in sweat after he finished striking. Water would come out with just a little twist. So later on, Shao Xuan would take off his jacket and put it aside when he was working, so that it didn't get smelly.

Ding!

Ding!

Ding!

...

Every afternoon, striking sounds like that would appear in old Ke's house.

One strike, two strikes... fifty, fifty-one... a hundred... five hundred...

Shao Xuan kept on striking the stone cores restlessly, as if he knew nothing about fatigue. A large stone core gradually became smaller as tiny stone flakes dropped down. The stone flakes became thinner and thinner than as time went on.

After finishing the striking of one stone core, Shao Xuan grabbed the second and the third without taking a break...

After the third one was finished, Shao Xuan looked like a drowned victim who had just been fished out by others.

After taking a drink, Shao Xuan stood aside so that old Ke could elaborate on the details that needed to be paid attention to when he refined them later. He showed Shao Xuan how to refine stone flakes in different shapes, and how to refine the remaining stone core.

Old Ke said that every stone had its own story, and even the most excellent stoneware crafter might not be able to understand all stones' stories. However, every time old Ke was teaching, he tried to explain all the knowledge that he had mastered up to now with Shao Xuan.

Shao Xuan listened with all his attention, for some words seemed unimportant, but contained much knowledge hidden within.

After a short break and having finished listening to old Ke's lecture, Shao Xuan continued to work. However, this time he stopped striking, and instead started refining.

In order to meet old Ke's high standard, Shao Xuan had to focus more during the process, and had to be more precise in controlling his totemic power.

That was not something easy. When refining, Shao Xuan was fully concentrated on the stone. And, despite the obvious soreness and aching, it wasn't until the refining was done and Shao Xuan had regained awareness, that he felt a wave of pain in his head. Sometimes he even felt a sensation as if he were hit by an awl, and sweat drops constantly oozed like beans from his forehead.

Old Ke said that it was normal and that he went through all those processes

when he was a young apprentice.

Although tired, Shao Xuan's progress was obvious since he had more precise control of his totemic power.

Old Ke showed traces of satisfaction in his eyes as he sat aside. Shao Xuan's progress went beyond his expectations. For all those years, old Ke had known many people who tried to learn stone crafting, yet none of them could achieve Shao Xuan's progress!

For many people, they might spend one or two years of learning without having Shao Xuan's skills. Of course there were some talented fellows. For example, Lang Ga used less than fifty days to learn back then, and Lang Ga's grandfather had bragged about that in front of old Ke.

But, how long had Shao Xuan been learning? Merely ten days!

In fact, old Ke would love to go up the mountain immediately and have a "nice chat" with that old man who made ground bows. However, he needed to wait a little longer... just a little longer...

As he was thinking about what facial expression the old guy might have when he learnt about Shao Xuan, Ke's sight froze for a moment. He opened his eyes wide as if he saw something inconceivable.

Totemic patterns were revealed on Shao Xuan's body, which was not strange during this time as Shao Xuan would use his totemic power when striking and crafting. Naturally, when the totemic power was used, totemic patterns would show up.

What astonished old Ke was not the totemic pattern. What he saw was even more inconceivable than when he saw Shao Xuan use totemic power while striking stones!

As was known to all people in the tribe, the newly-awakened warriors totemic pattern would only cover their whole body when they were just awakened by the fire pit. After the ritual ceremony, all their totemic patterns would shrink. The totemic patterns that covered the entire arm would shrink to the upper arm, slightly past one's shoulder, and the totemic patterns on the legs would also shrink to above the knee.

Because of this, when new totemic warriors used their totemic power, the patterns that showed up wouldn't extend to one's elbows and knees, identifying them as a primary warrior. When someday, one's totemic pattern extends over his elbows and knees, it means that he is no longer a primary warrior and has become a mid-level warrior. This was the most efficient and most direct way to tell a totemic warrior's level.

Totemic patterns would only extend when warriors faced numerous risks and threats by ferocious beasts in hunting missions, and had significant breakthroughs. Also, the extension of totemic patterns was quite limited. Some warriors, with over ten years of hunting experience, may not have totemic patterns that extended over their elbows and knees. So it meant that they were still merely primary warriors, and the progress was rather slow.

But, how could the totemic patterns in Shao Xuan's body be explained?

Old Ke's eyelids beat like hell, for he clearly remembered that the totemic patterns on Shao Xuan's upper arm were at the same length as other newly-awakened warriors when he first came by to learn stone crafting. they were slightly past his shoulder.

However, now the totemic patterns on Shao Xuan's upper arm had extended forward about the length of a finger!

In the past, old Ke had never paid attention to the totemic patterns on Shao Xuan's arm, and had only glimpsed at them, because he wondered when Shao Xuan would become a mid-level totemic warrior. He had never expected such a discovery! Since old Ke could easily tell the slight difference in stoneware, how could he not notice the extension of the totemic patterns on Shao Xuan's arm?!

Do not underestimate the length of a finger. Others might not be able to achieve that in years!

But how long had Shao Xuan been awakened?

Based on that speed, how long would it take for him to become a mid-level totemic warrior?

Old Ke felt that his eyelids beat even more heavily.

# Chapter 34 – Change of style

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Ke suddenly jumped off his stone stool as he rubbed his eyelids. With the lack of a leg, he swayed when standing. His big action of course drew Shao Xuan's attention.

Shao Xuan dropped his almost-completed stoneware and grinding stone, and looked at old Ke curiously. He was in a pretty good state of mind and felt that he had not made any mistakes. With everything in the process reaching old Ke's standard, why was he acting like he was in a "what the fuck" kind of mood?

"Ah-Xuan, you... you... you..."

Ke finally said a complete sentence after many you's, "How do you train yourself normally?"

Not knowing why Ke asked that, Shao Xuan explained the training arrangements he had recently, in detail, of course not mentioning the special power he had.

To be honest, his training recently was more like preparing for stone crafting than normal training. There were many newly-awakened kids by the training ground, just like Shao Xuan. They were either training their strength, or practicing by throwing stuff. Shao Xuan was the only one focusing on finding stone cores. Some people even secretly mocked him for doing the wrong thing.

After some thinking, Ke did not find any abnormal points based on Shao Xuan's description. Shao Xuan worked very hard and he showed endless effort when he was doing the stone crafting. That was also the reason why Ke was willing to teach him. However, Ke himself was pretty hard-working when he was

learning the skills, why didn't he achieve such significant progress?

Anyways, Ke could not figure out the reason, so he had to attribute Shao Xuan's achievements to his talent. No wonder he awakened at the age of ten.

Old Ke waved his hand to tell Shao Xuan to continue after he calmed himself down. On second thought, he stopped Shao Xuan and took out a big straw curtain and divided the stoneware workshop into two parts. He asked Shao Xuan to go to the inner room to keep crafting.

Although feeling curious, Shao Xuan followed his command. Old Ke must be doing it for some reason.

From the other side of the straw curtain, old Ke could still see the small figure of Shao Xuan, crafting and refining a piece of stone flake. Old Ke's eyebrows relaxed, and he couldn't help but smile as if he had thought of something.

Shao Xuan came out from his separated workshop when it was almost sunset, covered with sweat. He passed the stoneware he completed to old Ke for examination. He crafted more stone flakes and stone cores than usual, so he got out later than usual.

However, old Ke did not examine Shao Xuan's stoneware one by one as usual, instead, he put them aside after a glimpse at them, old Ke chose not to look more, but he told Shao Xuan, "You should go now. Starting from tomorrow, you may carve and refine stones according to your own judgement. Do whatever you think is right."

"Okay, I will."

In fact, Shao Xuan wanted to make something of his own a long time ago. However, he was not that skilled, so the thing that he created was totally different than what he had in mind, and sometimes he failed during the process. Now since old Ke had said so, Shao Xuan wanted to do it again properly.

In order to make a satisfying stoneware, he needed to go through the process of carving stone flakes, refining, pressuring, heating and so on. Also a lot of tools were required, such as a hammer, press-roller, plunger, grinding stone, chopping stone and other fixing materials. The tools in Shao Xuan's cabin were

not enough, so Shao Xuan needed to come to old Ke's place every day if he wanted to craft something.

However, at the very beginning, Shao Xuan did not dare to dream so wildly, so he decided to start with the normally used stoneware in the tribe.

The next day, Shao Xuan took the stone cores he had selected that morning to old Ke's place, and began to craft.

Shao Xuan intended to craft a double-winged stone arrowhead by himself, one of the most frequently used stone arrowheads. Lang Ga alone, had a large consumption of them.

Old Ke had taught Shao Xuan about the techniques to make a stone arrowhead, and said the other skills could only be gained during the process of practicing. Of course old Ke pointed out some details that were worth paying attention to.

For the next few days, old Ke did not watch Shao Xuan closely from his side as Shao Xuan did the crafting. After all, Shao Xuan could do just as well without his supervision. Leaning on a wooden cane, old Ke took out a wooden box filled with all kinds of stoneware in different sizes and put them out in front of his house.

They were the stoneware made by Shao Xuan over the past few days. Most of them were spearheads and arrowheads and had a style a little different from old Ke's.

In fact, old Ke had changed his rules lately. During the afternoon he no longer allowed people to come inside his house. In the mornings he would come out with some completed stoneware. One needed to do the trading fast if he wanted some of his stoneware, because old Ke would collect his things and go inside the room at noon, and not come out in the afternoon.

So when seeing that old Ke took things out at that hour, people gathered.

"Hey, old Ke, why are you doing business at this time now?"

"Hi, old Ke, these things are not Ah-Xuan's handcraft, right?"



Many people knew that Shao Xuan was learning stone crafting from old Ke, but people were not optimistic about it. Some would discuss in private how long Shao Xuan could manage to keep learning, and whether he would be like old Ke's former apprentices that left, or got kicked out by old Ke forcefully. However, unexpectedly, Shao Xuan was still learning, and it seemed that old Ke was not frustrated or mad as well.

Wasn't that strange?

Actually, the one who guessed the stoneware was made by Shao Xuan laughed at himself after he finished his sentence. People coming with him also laughed over it, and none of them took it seriously. After all, in their perspective, Shao Xuan had only been learning for a few days, and it was impossible for him to craft such successful stoneware. They were just messing with old Ke.

"This is a nice stone arrowhead, and it could be used for setting up ground bows... Hey, the barbs are wonderfully polished! I like that!" one squatted down and began to select his favorite items.

Seeing that someone had begun choosing, the others stopped messing around and hurriedly began to choose their own favorite items, as if fearing that all the good stuff would be bought by others. After all, the stoneware from old Ke's place was much better than the other's.

"Hey, old Ke, have you changed your style? The barbs on your arrowheads used to be shorter." A warrior said as he touched the wings of a stone arrowhead.

Ke just sat there with his poker face as usual, in silence.

The warriors that came to do the trading were already used to old Ke's character and did not expect old Ke to explain. After all, it was normal that a stoneware crafter changed his style.

When hunting, warriors had a large consumption of stoneware, because unlike metals which could be recycled, the stoneware could only be used once. This resulted in a rather high scrap rate, which led to warriors preparing a lot of stoneware before every hunting mission.

Almost twenty days had passed since the other hunting team left, normally speaking, hunting teams would return home in twenty days. Even when they met some hardships or other difficulties, the hunting period would not be more than thirty days. Their families were still in the tribe after all, and they would starve if the warriors did not return.

So if someone did some calculations, one would know that the hunting team was about to return. Meaning the other hunting team was preparing to leave. Once the hunting team returned, the other one would set off for hunting after handing over their daily duties. The earlier they prepared their stoneware, the better.

“They will return in a couple of days. In the morning I saw that wounded people were sent back. This time two warriors were badly injured, but not fatally. I heard that no one got killed this time.” Someone said as he chose the items.

“So we are about to set off? I have to go back home and take a few more things to trade with old Ke.”

“You said that two were injured? Who were they?”

“...”

People began to discuss but their selection speed did not slow down. Once they had chosen an item, they would grasp it tightly in their hand, and the others would regret not grasping it sooner.

“You do the trading or not, hold your tongue, and get lost if you’re done with trading!” Old Ke waved his arm with an icy face. They’d better do the discussion elsewhere. Ah-Xuan was still in the room, crafting, they might disturb him!

In the eyes of the crowd, old Ke was a tough guy and he was not easy to deal with. It seemed that he cared about nothing but stoneware. He was also quite aggressive when yelling. However, in fact, old Ke valued Shao Xuan more than anyone else in his heart. He became unhappy when people started making noise and he began to drive them away.

People were not angry. They stopped talking and hurriedly continued their picking.

When the majority of the stoneware was picked out by others, and seeing that no more people were coming, old Ke collected the remaining small stoneware into the wooded box. He shook his head as he talked to himself, “Why are the small stoneware unappreciated? When used properly, they can be more lethal than the big ones.”

When Shao Xuan had finished today’s work, he headed back home with his exhausted body when at the very same time, the hunting team on mission returned.

# Chapter 35 – Not too bad, huh?

---

Translated by Sunyancai

In the midst of cheers, the hunting team returned on that “Glory Road”, and their bodies left long shadows because of the sunset.

Strong warriors carried game much bigger than themselves, and they looked like ants carrying quail eggs. Some of them would not only carry the game on their shoulders, they would sling the game over their backs, or drag them with straw ropes.

It was a big harvest, and the warriors were quite loaded.

It was said that during this mission, no one got killed, but two warriors were badly injured. The injured were at the Shaman’s place and they were already stable. Because of their tough warrior’s body, they would be totally energetic again after some time’s rest.

Shao Xuan was more than tired because of a whole afternoon’s striking and crafting. He turned back and headed towards his own cabin after he had spotted Lang Ga and Mai in the crowd, he did not rush forward to cheer for them, like the others. He was exhausted already.

In the front part of the team, an obvious shorter person carried two giant boars. That was Mao and he was very pleased with himself. He paid extra attention on people’s praise and his mouth could not be kept closed because of the smile. It felt...so good! He straightened his back more and looked at the crowd as he turned his head, just then, Shao Xuan’s back leaving with Caesar entered his sight.

Shao Xuan was not spirited because of tiredness, and judging from his back, it

looked like he was pretty upset.

Mao thought that Shao Xuan must have been humiliated by him carrying two giant boars. Also, Mao thought about how to crush his dignity again when Shao Xuan joined the hunting mission.

After a night's rest, Shao Xuan felt that he was full of strength again, full of vigor. The sourness of his muscles also disappeared, as if he had not done so much striking yesterday.

After he had spent the whole morning collecting stone cores, Shao Xuan as usual planned to go to old Ke's place in the afternoon.

However, old Ke told Shao Xuan to take a break for today, so that he could get sufficient rest.

Looking at the works he had completed these days, Shao Xuan decided to go out as he picked out some items. The stone tools that old Ke took out for trading were only half of Shao Xuan's production. The other half, old Ke asked Shao Xuan to keep for himself. So now Shao Xuan still had a lot of stoneware for himself.

He filled the selected stoneware into two mesh bags made from straw rope, and began to walk to the mountain side district.

By the time Shao Xuan arrived, Lang Ga was still sleeping. Every time when he was not on duty, Lang Ga would sleep for three or four days when he came back from a hunting mission.

"What's up?" Lang Ga yawned, and his eyes were almost closed.

"Oh, I'm here to give you something. You should go back to sleep." Shao Xuan dropped one of the mesh bags on the stone table in the room, and prepared to leave. He wanted to hear the stories during this time's hunting mission at first, but based on the current circumstances, he should wait for a few more days for stories.

"For me?" Lang Ga was curious about what Shao Xuan had brought, even though he was sleepy.

Lang Ga opened the bag, and when he saw the completed stone arrowheads

inside, his nearly closed eyes opened wide immediately. Traces of sparkles flashed in his eyes and he took out one stone arrowhead and observed it closely.

The two edges on that stone arrowhead were especially made according to Lang Ga's usual needs. So the size and shape were slightly different than normal ones, and the barbs were longer, because Lang Ga was used to this type of stone arrowheads already. If changed at his will, perhaps Lang Ga would not find them useful. So Shao Xuan did not add his own ideas on them.

Lang Ga stared at the stone arrowhead he had at hand, and the more he looked at it, the more surprised he became.

The arrowheads in front of him were well polished, and the important thing was that the two edges were completely perfect! The two edges could balance the arrowhead, especially when it's flying, so that it might hit the target at a more precise angle. When the wings were wrongly processed, it would affect the whole hunting mission. In order to increase the lethality of the arrowhead, Lang Ga would craft his own arrowheads, with longer and sharper edges, and two sharp barbs.

Lang Ga had always felt that only his own hand-made arrowheads would be useful for him. And he disliked others' work, even when the arrowheads were from his grandfather. However, seeing the arrowhead at hand, Lang Ga was more than shocked. Because he could tell by weighing it at hand, that these arrowheads were perfect for him to use.

The arrowheads he had at hand now looked exactly the same as the ones that Lang Ga crafted himself. No, in fact they were not exactly the same. These arrowheads in front of him were more close to perfection.

Normally when Lang Ga crafted arrowheads himself, he would not bother polishing the details for he had a large consumption of them. However, the ones in front of him were much more refined.

"Hey, thank you, Ah-Xuan! I like them very much! By the way, please thank old Ke for making such nice arrowheads for me!"

In the eyes of Lang Ga, of course the stone arrowheads were made by old Ke, and naturally Shao Xuan asked them from old Ke give them to him.

Lang Ga used his thumb to touch the edge of the stone arrowhead. Ah, the blade was so sharp, no wonder it came from the master!

Shao Xuan was about to walk out but he turned around and smiled at Lang Ga's words, "I'll pass your words, but by the way, those arrowheads were all crafted by me. You should try and see if they are useful."

At Shao Xuan's response, Lang Ga froze as he was touching the stone arrowhead. He looked up at Shao Xuan, astonished as the muscle on his face quivered hard twice.

"Wait a moment!"

Lang Ga took a few steps and came in front of Shao Xuan. He practically asked the question word by word, as he grasped the arrowhead with his hand, "This is your work??"

Shao Xuan nodded, "Yes. Not too bad, huh?"

Not...too bad?

Lang Ga's stared at Shao Xuan with red eyes and heavy breath.

If those were judged as "not too bad", then how should his own hand-made arrowheads be judged as? Stone waste?

Shao Xuan did not quite understand what Lang Ga meant by doing that. He had gotten some stone arrowheads from Lang Ga. Since the arrowheads had already been used once, Lang Ga did not intend to take them to hunting missions in the future. However, it would be such a waste to throw them away, so he gave them to Shao Xuan for his training. Back then, Lang Ga and the others were all using second-handed stoneware to practice, which was quite normal in the tribe.

Shao Xuan made those stone arrowheads based on those that Lang Ga gave him. There were more or less defects in the stone arrowheads, but generally speaking it wouldn't affect the usage much. Shao Xuan had always thought that those defects were caused by usage, and old Ke also did not comment on those when he saw them. But for the arrowheads crafted by Shao Xuan, old Ke

appraised them as “barely not too bad”. That was also the reason why Shao Xuan said “not too bad”.

Lang Ga stared at Shao Xuan with a rather complicated look. Perhaps it was because that he had a grandfather who was a stoneware crafter. He thought he was talented in stone crafting. He made stone tools himself, and now he had some achievements in that field. Even though his skills were not as good as his grandfather’s, he was confident that after perhaps ten years, he would be better than him. What’s more, among his peer he had more skill in crafting than most people. Especially when it came to stone arrowheads, almost no one could make better arrowheads than him!

However, now there’s a newly-awakened kid, who was only ten years old, and had only been learning stone crafting for less than thirty days. The stone arrowheads made by him were slightly better than his works. Based on his eye of quality, he could naturally tell that this stoneware could not be made just given enough time and efforts. Let alone the fact that the stone arrowheads were quite smooth at their surface, and as there was no point of stagnation, highly likely, these arrowheads were processed quickly and smoothly!

Why was there so much difference since he came back from the hunting mission?

I was only out for twenty days, not two years!

Lang Ga’s face turned red, as he thought of giving a bunch of second-handed stone arrowheads with many flaws to Shao Xuan before the hunting mission. He wanted to hide under the ground. Even though he was thick-skinned usually, he had totally different standards when it came to stoneware. Perhaps he was affected by his grandfather.

Take a deep breath!

Then another deep breath!

Lang Ga put out three trembling fingers and pointed at the outside, “You, do not show your face in front of me for the next three days!”

As he finished his sentence, Lang Ga dropped the curtain and he could not sleep anymore. He stepped towards the small room that he used for stone



crafting, and began to work.

While from the other house near Lang Ga's room, walked out an old man with grey hair. He looked hale and hearty even though he was old at age. It seemed that he could still easily carry a stone that weighed a hundred kilos.

That was just Lang Ga's grandfather. The old man just woke up from his nap and now he intended to go down the mountain to some friends as he chewed some meat jerky in his mouth. He thought perhaps one of his sons was crafting stones in preparation for the next hunting mission, when he heard the sound of grinding stones. However, with a single look through the window, he found out that it was his grandson, who was supposed to be sleeping in his own room. Now he was working in the stoneware crafting workshop!

The old man nearly choked by the meat jerky because of shock. His eyes were wide open like stone balls, and he stared at Lang Ga in the same manner as staring at a ferocious beast in the forest that existed once in a century.

What the fuck?!

That little bastard used to sleep for three to four days after every hunting mission, and even beating him up could not drag him out of his bed! What happened?

While on the other hand, Shao Xuan was quite confused when he was told "not to show his face for the next three days". What was wrong with Lang Ga? Hypotension because of sleepiness?

Shao Xuan shook his head, as he took the other bag and continued to climb up the mountain, because Mai lived higher in the mountain.

# Chapter 36 – Come and punch me

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Being a mid-level totemic warrior, Mai occupied an important position in the hunting team, so he had a lot to deal with when he came back to the tribe. Of course, he would not be as idle as Lang Ga. When Shao Xuan arrived, he was just assigning patrol missions to some warriors.

Shao Xuan waited and he came inside only after the other two warriors had left.

Inside the room, Mai was cutting the meat. During the hunting mission, warriors would just pretreat the meat, so after they came back, they needed to cut the meat into smaller pieces, and preserve some of them. Also, they had to sort out different kinds of meat for later use.

“Hello there.” Mai waved his hand seeing Shao Xuan entering the room, as he tossed a piece of meat covered in blood, the size of a watermelon, to Shao Xuan, “Here you go. Take it back with you later, for you get hungry easily after you become a totemic warrior. Training is exhausting.”

Many people would deduct their training time when there was a lack of food. After all, totemic warriors would consume a lot of energy when they trained themselves. Naturally they would eat more. Especially for those newly-awakened warriors like Shao Xuan, they were in the process of building up their bodies, so food became even more of an essential object.

“Thank you, uncle Mai.” Shao Xuan took the meat and handed over the mesh bag to him, “This is for you.”

Mai dropped the stone axe in his hand and looked at the mesh bag curiously,

“Did you made them yourself?”

“Yep. They can’t of course be compared with your own tools, but I guess they could still be useful anyway.” Shao Xuan scratched his head. Unlike the stoneware he sent Lang Ga, he picked less stone arrowheads, but instead he added more spearheads into the mesh bag. Spearheads were used for throwing. Because the two people had different positions in the hunting team, the stone tools they tended to use were different.

Mai had already heard about Shao Xuan learning stone crafting with Ke from Lang Ga, however, it had been such a short time, so Mai did not expect anything fine from him. Shao Xuan was already thoughtful for bringing things here, and he would never trash the kid’s confidence and enthusiasm.

Mai smiled as he opened up the mesh bag. He planned to say something to encouraging him, “Actually, you can never rush yourself in the process of stone crafting. At your age and with such short time’s learning, you are already pretty good for making these, and in the future...”

His words stopped as Mai took a look at the fine-crafted spearheads in the mesh bag. He literally swallowed the next part of his words back into his stomach.

The well-crafted spearheads were just the same as those he often used. They had deeper ridges and the blades on the two wing edges were extremely sharp. The two wings stretched and joined one another on the sharp peak, which was very smooth without any trace of carving. Obviously the stone crafter paid extra attention while polishing them. Unlike most spearheads for other warriors, Mai liked the kind of spearheads with deep bloodthirsty ridges in the both sides, and Shao Xuan had noticed that, so he added them on his spearheads too!

Just like Lang Ga, Mai had given Shao Xuan some used stone tools for training as well. Most of his used tools were stone spearheads, but he had never thought about receiving such nice gifts in return when he offered Shao Xuan those used spearheads.

“Are... Are these... from your own stone crafting?!”

Mai stared at Shao Xuan, until he saw him nod. Then Mai looked back at the spearheads he had at hand. Indeed, he had not expected Shao Xuan to possess

such amazing talent. Under the current circumstances, even if Shao Xuan could not improve his ability, he could live a peaceful life without starvation in the tribe, depending on his skills.

After a while's hesitation, Mai laughed out, "Good! Excellent!"

Unlike Lang Ga, Mai had not bothered to pay so much attention on stone crafting after all, so he cared not that much for competition. In front of Shao Xuan's handworks, he had pure admiration.

After properly storing those spearheads, Mai asked about Shao Xuan's training lately and offered some advices. He was confident about Shao Xuan, but still he agreed with the idea that newly-awakened warriors should get as much trainings as possible, and they should not think about joining hunting missions in a hurry. Or else, they would be just like the lad named Ah-Fei, who only turned out to be a burden of the hunting team when it came to real hunting. He was too eager to succeed, but full of flaws when the time came.

Mai thought for a bit and reached out his palm, as he said to Shao Xuan, "punch my hand, and let me see how much strength you've got."

An obvious occurrence for totemic warriors when they got any improvement was that they would obtain more strength. That was why Mai asked Shao Xuan to do that. He wanted to see his progress during this period's training by that. However, Mai did not expect Shao Xuan to have much progress, for he was learning stone crafting these days after all.

"Okay."

Shao Xuan placed the meat at a corner, and moved his limbs a little. In fact, he himself also did not know how he was different from other kids that awakened at the same time with him, aside from the special ability he got. Also he was unaware of which stage had he reached. Gaining Mai's advice and judgement would be very beneficial to Shao Xuan's training in the future.

Since it was a test for strength, he had to use the totemic power inside him.

After a deep breath, Shao Xuan urged the totemic power inside him and on his cheeks there were clear totemic patterns revealed immediately, and soon the totemic pattern spread from his face to the nape.

Seeing that Shao Xuan stimulated the totemic power so quickly and naturally, Mai was quite satisfied. Shao Xuan was already much better than some who took a lifetime to be able to stimulate their totemic powers like him.

Suddenly, Shao Xuan stepped on the ground with his right foot, while he rushed at Mai with a fast speed. He punched hard on Mai's palm.

Bang!

It was a fist against a palm, but it was like two mountains crashing against each other.

Shao Xuan felt like he punched a piece of steel, and it felt totally different from his daily training when he punched at the mountain rock.

Shao Xuan's body shook a little, and he stepped back as he withdrew his fist and rubbed his hand with the mouth open. In fact, it was not just the hand, he felt that his whole arm was hurting.

As expected, there was a huge gap between some newly-awakened kid and a mid-level totemic warrior. Looking at Mai, his palm did not even turn red as if he was just hit by a piece of tofu.

Shao Xuan also noticed that Mai had flashing totemic patterns on his body, which stretched over his elbows. They even got to his forearms. However, Shao Xuan's own totemic patterns had only extended over his shoulders.

However, Mai was not as calm as he acted out. He was looking at Shao Xuan in surprise. Compared with the hurt at his palm, the totemic patterns on Shao Xuan's body was the thing that shocked him most. However, the totemic patterns had gone, and Mai was not sure whether he was imagining it... But the strength of that punch was larger than most newly-awakened kids....

It was not wintertime, and the temperature grew higher every day. Since he had to train himself every day, Shao Xuan wore a sleeveless animal skin top in order to be more convenient. Naturally his totemic patterns were out in the open, even though they just extended over his shoulders.

Perhaps Mai was not so observant as old Ke, but compared with most people,

he could exceed them easily.

“Again! Now use all your strength.” Mai commanded.

Seeing that perhaps Mai had some other thoughts, Shao Xuan did not hesitate to follow his order.

Taking a deep breath, Shao Xuan stimulated the totemic power in his body again, the totem in his mind lit up, and the flame covering those two horns rose up, which meant that he had fully aroused his totemic power.

Feeling enormous strength running through every piece of his muscles and every bone, Shao Xuan’s mind also reached the peak. After such a long time doing stone crafting, Shao Xuan’s precise control of totemic power showed its advantage, he became very familiar with the feeling of gathering up all his strength, for he could feel that every day during the process of stone crafting. Every time when that happened, he would feel extremely self-confidence!

In the meantime, the totemic patterns on Shao Xuan’s body became totally clear, one could feel the burning heat of the flame.

At the very moment that Shao Xuan took a step, the earth trembled slightly.

Whoosh!

Before the punch arrived, the wind pressure of the punch was already there.

Although Shao Xuan was just a primary warrior who had not been awakened for long, and his strength training was not good enough, Shao Xuan’s punch carried unmatched momentum at the bursting moment.

Seeing the kid in front of him, who was only as tall as his waist, Mai’s eyes opened more.

Bang!

Clear sound of cracks rose.

Shao Xuan immediately felt the sharp sting all over his whole arm. It was like he got roasted on a bonfire, and constant burning pain that seemed to be impossible to be stopped.

However, Mai’s face froze for some time, but soon he recovered from his

astonishment. Inside his heart he was still shocked, as he stared at Shao Xuan, while he forgot to take back his palm from the air.

The rebound made Shao Xuan step back a few steps and he had to shake his arm, as he created hissing sound out of subconscious. He did not expect it to hurt so much, and it felt totally different from the last punch.

“Ah-Xuan.” Mai said. His voice sounded somehow difficult and bitter.

“Yes?” Shao Xuan looked at Mai as he continued to shake his arm. He did not worry about breaking his bones, for even if that did happen, he would be fully recovered after a few days’ rest. That was the advantage of the physique of the tribe’s people.

“When you go back... you should prepare...”

At Mai’s words, Shao Xuan wondered if Mai would say the same thing that Lang Ga told him, such as to not show his face for three days or something like that. He stared at Mai for him to finish his sentence.

“Prepare... to join the hunting mission next time.”

What?

# Chapter 37 – Ground komodo tooth sabre

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan looked at Mai in surprise, for he did not expect him to say something like that.

Wasn't he supposed to attend the third hunting mission? Why did Mai change his mind?

Unless, it was because of the earlier punch?

"Okay." Shao Xuan answered.

Of course, Shao Xuan would be very glad to join the next hunting mission. Scenery in the forest changed every day, so one would get to see different sights if he entered the forest in different times. For example, there were some flowers that only bloomed once a year, and some plants would only have fruits and seeds once in a year. So one could see more and experience more when going out earlier. Or one had to wait another whole year to see the same situation.

Lang Ga and Ge both had told him in the past, that many plants in the forest were quite dangerous, so warriors needed to be able to spot and avoid them while hunting. However, one could only know them after seeing them once, or based on other people's descriptions, one could never get the whole image.

Also, since Mai allowed Shao Xuan to tag along during the next hunting mission, obviously he acknowledged his ability. So Shao Xuan needed to only prepare for the hunting.

At that time, some other person came to look for Mai, that was Tuo. Shao



Xuan had met him before and knew that they must have something to discuss, Shao Xuan decided to leave and excused himself.

“Since you are busy Uncle Mai, I will leave now. Thank you again, Uncle Mai!”

After Shao Xuan had left, Mai made a few movements with his stiff palm. He shook his shoulder and slapped his arm, some cracking sounds resounded. Because of Shao Xuan’s punch earlier, a few bones in his arm had been dislocated. And that shake pushed the bones back to where they were supposed to be.

Although his palm looked fine, Mai knew himself that his palm was injured. In the end, he had underestimated the boy!

In fact, Mai had planned to encourage Shao Xuan and persuade him to train more before he could go for a hunting mission. He also intended to share some examples of hunting with him, and take him to the third hunting mission. However, after experiencing the strength of Shao Xuan’s punch, Mai changed his mind.

“What did the boy mean with going back to prepare?” asked Tuo.

“To prepare to tag along with the next hunting mission.” Answered Mai.

Tuo showed some dissatisfaction, “Wasn’t he the one saying that the more preparation, the better? I thought he would be patient enough to wait until the third hunting mission. Did he come to beg you?”

For the sake of the Shaman, Tuo was kind towards Shao Xuan. However, when it came to hunting, Tuo did not want to make the slightest compromise, for, the first hunting mission, that just ended, was a good example. Fei’s several mistakes almost cost the lives of himself and other warriors.

Mai shook his head, “He did not bring up the subject, but I proposed it.”

“Why?” Tuo was even more confused.

Mai’s smile on the face grew bigger and bigger, “Since the blade is already almost finished, sharpening it even more is just a waste of time, for it could not be much more sharper anyway. A talent should not be buried in the tribe, he needs to go outside and challenge himself in the forest.”

As Shao Xuan left Mai's place, he took big strides going down the mountain. His every step was quite big, and it seemed that he only tipped on the stones and basically just flew down the path.

After going down the mountain, Shao Xuan did not return to his cabin immediately, for he did not worry about Caesar. He knew that Caesar was helping the kids in orphan cave to dig out stone worms.

As he was about to call out Ke's name in front of old Ke's house, he saw the straw curtain get lifted fiercely, and an old man with grey hair marched out.

Judging from the old man's expression, he seemed angry, for his beard almost flew up and reached his eyes.

Seeing Shao Xuan standing at the front door, the old man glimpsed at him from his head to his toe, frowned, as if thinking about something. His look was like a stone knife, trying to peel his body as if he was a stone core in the eyes of the old man. His beard waved a little, suggesting that he wanted to say something. However, in the end, the old man left without saying anything, except for a loud humph.

Shao Xuan was curious about his reaction. Was he mentally disturbed?

Seeing Ge pop his head out and look around, Shao Xuan asked, "Who was that?"

After confirming that the old man had left, Ge chuckled, "That is Lang Ga's grandfather."

That was Lang Ga's grandpa?!

Indeed, he was exactly like Lang Ga's described him, a grumpy old fellow.

Entering the room, Shao Xuan shared the news that Mai allowed him to tag along during the next hunting mission.

Ge's jaw almost fell on the ground at the news, he was totally stunned, while old Ke answered with a single "hmm" calmly, as if he had already expected that. Without any more comment, he asked Shao Xuan to come inside and craft the hunting tools.

The stone tools for hunting need to be in much higher quality than those for training purposes, and crafting those stone tools took longer time. Shao Xuan already had plenty stone tools for training, but he only had a few for actual hunting purposes. Half of his handiwork was traded out by old Ke, and he gave those specially-made tools to Lang Ga and Mai as gifts. So what was left for his own use was quite limited in quantity.

Shao Xuan also did not explain more, and he went inside after taking off his animal skin clothes.

Ge looked at the straw curtain hanging there as a separator, and snickered. He knew that old Ke was treating Shao Xuan pretty seriously and he was hiding him from the others!

It was true that during this period of time, old Ke allowed no one to come inside the house. However, there were people like Ge, who would try to enter by using the window. Of course there were also others that couldn't be stopped by old Ke, and Lang Ga's grandpa was just one of them.

Old Ke was trying to keep Shao Xuan hidden from the others so he didn't get stolen away by some other stone crafters.

"Hey, old Ke. Do you know why they allowed Ah-Xuan to join the hunting mission in advance?" asked Ge.

Old Ke remained silence.

"Humph, you can keep your little secret all to yourself anyway." Ge walked inside and carefully lifted the straw curtain a bit. He quietly stared at Shao Xuan inside, trying to see what was different now, that made the old-fashioned stubborn Mai change his style.

After a while observing, Ge walked back with one hand cupping his jaw with mouth wide open. He was totally stunned, as if he had seen a carnivorous animal suddenly become a herbivore.

"He, he, he..." Before Ge had the chance to describe what he saw, he noticed that old Ke was polishing a tooth-white sabre. All his words were swallowed back into his stomach, and after some time, Ge pointed at the sabre being polished and jabbered, "You, you, you..."

There were a lot of marks on the sabre's body, and plenty of dense small gaps were spread out over the blade. Seen from afar, they looked like serrations, but in fact, these marks were caused by constant use. The original hilt was broken long time ago, so old Ke tore it down and the handle part now was exposed with an extending part of the sabre, the base the original hilt was installed on.

Ge's sight was fixed on that sabre and it took him a really long time to come back to his senses. He had guessed what old Ke was about to do, which surprised him, that was even more shocking to him than seeing Shao Xuan's totemic patterns.

When Shao Xuan came out of the room, as he had finished today's stone cores, old Ke was installing the hilt to that well-polished sabre. The thing he used for the hilt was a special kind of resin. After it had been mixed and heated up, it was then shaped into the shape of a hilt and covered the extending part of the sabre, until it cooled down and then became a new hilt. Shao Xuan also normally uses the same process, as those kinds of hilts felt much better than wooden ones or those made from straw ropes.

"Wait a second, take this sabre with you after I finish with the hilt." Old Ke said to Shao Xuan, who was just about to leave.

Shao Xuan looked up at that sabre. It was relatively wide, and the blade was nearly half a meter long. The back of the sabre was as thick as a thumb, which was much thicker than most of Shao Xuan's work.

Judging from Ge's expression, Shao Xuan knew that the sabre was something significant. He had not yet touched the sabre, so he couldn't say anything certain, but as he stared at the sabre, he sensed that a heavy icy feeling was permeating in the air, as if it was trying to push people down to the ground.

"That is...?" Shao Xuan was confused.

"That is a sabre made from the tooth of a ground komodo." Ge glared at the sabre with all the reluctance in the world. He wanted to grab it into his own arms. Ever since old Ke had his leg broken, no one had ever seen that sabre. In the past, he had begged old Ke for a thousand times, but old Ke still refused to take it out and let him have a look. However, now, old Ke was giving the sabre that represented his glorious days to Shao Xuan!

Ge envied Shao Xuan in his heart, but he knew his own situation and he knew that he could only admire it, and lose all other thoughts.

“Ground komodo?!”

It was a ground komodo!

Although Shao Xuan had never seen one in real life, Shao Xuan had heard from Lang Ga and the others, that a ground komodo was a giant beast living under the ground. When facing a ground komodo during a hunting mission, no warrior should think about tossing any stone spearhead at him, and the only thing one could do was to run for their lives. No one wanted to challenge a ground komodo, because a human could never win.

After listening to so many hunting stories from Lang Ga, Shao Xuan had never heard which hunting team had encountered a ground komodo.

After old Ke passed the sabre to Shao Xuan and pushed him out the door, Ge was still staring at Shao Xuan’s back but his sight was fixed on the sabre.

The sabre did not look showy but it was pretty heavy, at least a hundred kilograms. Shao Xuan held the tooth sabre in front of his chest, and his mind was totally blank for a long time as he stood outside the house.

# Chapter 38 – Preparation

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan placed old Ke's sabre onto the newly-made stone table in his room, while Caesar bared his teeth as he glared at the sabre, standing at least two meters away from it. Ever since he sniffed the sabre earlier, Caesar became extremely cautious and his eyes showed that he was extremely alert, for he kept his distance from the sabre all the time and never came near.

Shao Xuan reached out his hand to touch the sabre's body, which was not the same cold feeling as normal stone knives. It had been decades, and the intense ferocious aura of the sabre finally settled down. After thousands of times' polishing, the knife became smaller in size because of the abrasion. The blade was full of small dents once, but it became smooth and sharp again after old Ke re-polished it.

Shao Xuan sighed slightly and he used a leather bag to carefully cover the sabre. He did not expect old Ke to give him such a precious sabre, without caring about that he might lose it.

After placing it aside, Shao Xuan took out a piece of stone plate. The stone that it was made from was not of good quality, and Shao Xuan was merely using it as a writing board. He had been keeping record on how many stone tools he needed to craft and how many had already been completed.

Aside from spearheads and arrowheads, Shao Xuan planned to make a few stone balls to take to the hunting, which could be used for flying chains to trip the beasts.

For the next three days, Shao Xuan had been stone crafting in old Ke's place

and he was there listening to old Ke's hunting stories.

Old Ke did not brag about his glorious days, and Shao Xuan did not ask further. He assumed that old Ke would tell his legends when he wanted to.

After they were finished with the work, old Ke asked Shao Xuan, "Do you know why people in the mountainside district rarely go fishing?"

That was something that Shao Xuan also wondered about, since people noticed that fishing was easy, why would so many people be so willing to risk their lives for hunting?

To be honest, pulling out fish was quite simple, so one would not go through much trouble as long as they mastered the tactics in it. Besides, as far as Shao Xuan knew, not every person in mountainside district had sufficient food.

However, in actuality, Shao Xuan had only seen a few old men, who had trouble walking around, come down the mountain and join the army of fishers. None of the kids living up there went fishing, let alone those warriors, except for those guards by the riverside. Basically no one would try to snatch the fish from people in the mountain foot district.

Old Ke raised up his hand and stared afar through the window. From that direction, the mountains afar could be seen.

"Because of the tradition," said old Ke, "Nine hundred years ago, the Chief and the Shaman left an admonition together, that all warriors must go for hunting as long as they are not disabled. Even when the food is sufficient, no one shall indulge himself in a leisurely life. One can never slack off and should try every possible way to better himself!"

It was never easy for totemic warriors to improve their strength. When they were hunting outside, they needed to be engaged in thousands of life-and-death struggles to improve themselves from first-level warriors to mid-level warriors. However, it would be extremely difficult if they wanted more progress. For warriors like Mai needed to be prepared to lose their lives every time they went hunting outside.

Among the whole mountain, people living in the mountain foot district were the weakest in ability, which also meant that they were relatively the slack

group of the tribe. But even so, every time when hunting, Shao Xuan had not seen a single face of reluctance. Everyone was so positive, even when they already had enough fish to support their living.

Many warriors living up in the mountain would never allow their kids to come down the mountain for fishing. Perhaps they did not want their kids to have the concept of “obtaining food is easy”. From the admonition that passed down through generations, all they needed to know was that they had to take risks to obtain food. To earn food and clothes, one had to put himself into danger and fight against those fierce animals in the forest.

Pressure was the only motivation of improvement.

“Those warriors who had not been tested by hunting are no true warriors!” old Ke summarized.

It sounded cruel, but quite understandable.

Shao Xuan thought of the fresco he saw on the wall back in the cave, and the last sentence, “One day, we shall return to our previous land. Glory is still in the fire, and the fire of the Scorching Horn will never be put out.”

After leaving old Ke’s place and coming back to his own cabin, Shao Xuan counted the stone tools he made today, and sorted them out, while placing them at the same place where he stored the other stone tools.

The arrowheads that Shao Xuan crafted for himself were not the same as those he made for Lang Ga. These arrowheads had more streamlined bodies and the wings appeared more like flat strips. Aside from those, Shao Xuan crafted a few three-winged arrowheads. Unlike the stone tools for training purposes, Shao Xuan had carved his name on every piece of stone tool that he planned to take with him on the hunting trip, which was a custom of all hunting warriors in the tribe.

After sorting out the stone tools, Shao Xuan noticed that Caesar was yawning as he squatted there with his ears droopy. He was not spirited at all, and at first sight one would see him as a lazy dog lying in front of his own door. No wonder that Lang Ga and the others would just ignore him these days, instead of seeing him the same way as they saw game. Animals like Caesar were not challenging enough, and they certainly had no interest towards a wolf who had lost his wild



nature.

However, how should he deal with Caesar while he's gone hunting? It would be over twenty days!

Leaving him home was not an option, and Shao Xuan would not feel comfortable if there was no one to look after him.

Send him up and ask for the Shaman's favor? No, that old wizard could barely look after himself when he got busy.

Shao Xuan even considered whether he should send Caesar back to the orphan cave, but after some serious thought, he gave up on that idea, for Caesar would be totally undisciplined if he stayed in the cave, and no kid there could control his behavior.

He thought of several people who might be able to take care of Caesar, but finally, Shao Xuan decided to ask old Ke to be his guardian. Also, Caesar would be obedient at old Ke's place.

Since Shao Xuan had been learning from old Ke for such a long time, Caesar became quite familiar with the place. What's more, Shao Xuan believed that old Ke would be good to Caesar.

So, three days after the previous hunting team came back, the other team prepared to set off.

Carrying old Ke's sabre and the stone tools he crafted for himself, Shao Xuan took a detour to old Ke's house, for he planned to leave Caesar there. Aside from Caesar, Shao Xuan left plenty of fish and meat. Caesar was growing fast, and he ate more every day.

"Now be good and stay with old Ke. I'll pick you up once I return."

Shao Xuan could still hear Caesar's whine as he carried his equipment and climbed up the mountain. He sounded pretty pitiable... He was more like a dog...

According to the earlier agreement with Lang Ga, Shao Xuan should stop by at his place first, and then Lang Ga would be the one to take Shao Xuan to the

mountain top. Before the hunting team set off, there was a gathering. Shao Xuan was unfamiliar with many rules and procedures, so he had to be guided by someone, or else he could easily make mistakes.

By the time Shao Xuan arrived, Lang Ga was already waiting at the door, with quite a few big animal-skin bags full of tools and equipment.

“Let’s go.” Lang Ga carried the bags and walked in the front.

Many people saw Shao Xuan as he climbed the mountain with Lang Ga. People were pretty surprised to see him, for no one expected that Shao Xuan could tag along with the hunting team this time.

“Is Ah-Fei not with us?” Shao Xuan asked Lang Ga.

Shao Xuan had seen Fei’s figure, but he noticed that Fei did not carry any equipment, nor was he heading up the mountain. In fact, he glanced at Shao Xuan angrily.

“Oh, him.” Lang Ga whispered, “In the last hunting mission, that lad disobeyed some order and caused a scene. So Mai and the others forbade him to join this mission, but left him at home for reflection. If his reflection was satisfying, then perhaps he could join the third mission. But anyway, he can’t go this time. So, you must remember to follow the orders when you are in the hunting team, Ah-Xuan.”

“Understood.” Shao Xuan answered.

They met Ang and a few other warriors that were Lang Ga’s friends, so they all went up to the mountaintop together.

The gathering was held the same place as last time’s ritual ceremony, however, this time the fire pit was not lit entirely.

The Shaman dressed in a grey cloak stood beside the fire pit with a stick in his hand, talking with Chief Ao. When Shao Xuan looked at him, the Shaman looked his way as well. After seeing Shao Xuan in the crowd, the Shaman obviously got stunned a little. Apparently he remembered Shao Xuan this time, and did not expect Shao Xuan to participate in this hunting mission as well.

# Chapter 39 – Setting off

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Although confused, the Shaman did not come and ask, but continued his work as usual.

The scene was not as spectacular as the ritual ceremony, which was attended by thousands of people. For every hunting mission, there were only about two hundred warriors. Warriors that got wounded from last mission would remain at home for recovering, and there were some others who needed to welcome a new birth at home, or needed to look after others. So they wouldn't be joining the hunting. Warriors in unstable conditions or had other assignments were also excluded from the hunting team. So even the same team would send out different warriors for different hunting missions.

Lang Ga and the others stood on their old spots naturally, and Shao Xuan stood right next to them.

In the front of the team stood the important people. There were about ten warriors and Mai was one of them.

The Shaman stood beside the fire pit, with a stone bowl in his hand. Inside the bowl there was some dark green pigment extracted out of some plants.

Warriors stepped forward one by one to let the Shaman draw patterns on their faces with that pigment in the bowl.

The patterns were similar as their totemic patterns. As the Shaman was drawing, he whispered something in his mouth. Shao Xuan could not hear him clearly, or even if he heard him clearly, he could not understand what it meant.

Not everyone in the hunting team could be painted on the face by the Shaman. The only group qualified enough to be painted were the important people standing in the front. Now their facial expressions were serious and respectful, as if they were in the middle of some holy ceremony.

As for Lang Ga and the others, there was pure admiration in their eyes. Perhaps deep down in their hearts, they were dreaming about some day to stand in the front of the team, and obtain the Shaman's blessing before the hunting team set off.

Even though Shao Xuan had his own opinions, his facial expression was just like everyone else in the crowd, which was serious enough, but mixed with some admiration.

After all ten warriors had been painted and stood back to where they were before, the atmosphere immediately loosened up. Led by the Chief, people began to sing the Song of Hunting.

It's such a shame that... Shao Xuan did not know how to sing that!

In the past, Shao Xuan had heard the Song of Hunting a few times, but he never managed to learn it. He had no idea that warriors were required to sing the song before the hunting teams set off.

Shit, it's like not knowing how to sing national anthem in the middle of a flag raising ceremony. So embarrassing to speak it out! Fuck!

However, the problem was that within the tribe, normally parents and other elder relatives would tell their kids how to sing the Song of Hunting. Shao Xuan came from the orphan cave, and he was in fact not this previous Ah-Xuan in the inside, he had never paid attention to that song. Lang Ga and the others did not expect to teach him about that as well, so all ignored it.

However, since Shao Xuan was not a real kid, he knew how to pretend even though he did now know how to sing the song.

Shao Xuan remained calm and he stood there with his mouth opening and closing constantly in silence. If not paid extra attention, he could be identified as an offbeat person in the crowd.

"Our ancestors existed since the beginning of heaven and earth. We relied on

hunting when our tribe rose. Spring is warm, with all ice and snow gone with the wind. Fowls and beasts dance, while birds and animals sing and warriors cheerfully go hunting...”

Originally Shao Xuan assumed that the Song of Hunting would come to an end after a few verses. However, as time went by, he discovered that the song was rather long, as if it was telling a story. Also, the verses described circumstances from spring to summer, and then from summer to autumn, while it finally ended in winter.

It was not only a long story; it was a fucking sad story!

As if all warriors were preparing to die chivalrously!

He wondered which “talent” in the tribe wrote that kind of a song.

Even though the song described a lot of things that happened in hunting missions, and warned people to be cautious, especially during winter time, Shao Xuan found it hardly inspiring. However, almost all warriors at the scene became really excited with their necks turning red, as if they got high on marijuana.

Shao Xuan could not understand these people’s mentality anyway, and perhaps that was just the difference between insiders and an outsider.

As Shao Xuan was singing silently in the crowd with his mouth opening and closing, the Shaman looked at his direction quite a few times. Shao Xuan sensed his sight already, but still, he kept his eyes fixed to the front and learnt from Lang Ga and the others. He got excited when others were excited. Also, when others took spears and roared at the sky, Shao Xuan copied and did the same. Lang Ga had mentioned before that Shao Xuan should do the same as he did, and then he wouldn’t make any mistakes.

The Shaman’s old face twitched when he observed Shao Xuan from the fire pit. Of course he noticed that Shao Xuan did not know how to sing the Song of Hunting. However, he had never expected him to be so shameless. He acted as if he were a real expert at the song. Other kids would already have been really scared if they were in Shao Xuan’s situation.

After a whole Song of Hunting, Shao Xuan felt that he had digested all the food he had in the morning.

Since the pep rally worked, the Chief did not say any more, but asked the main leader of this hunting mission to lead the team and set off. There were timings on hunting missions, or there would be many troubles if they missed the timing.

Shao Xuan lifted his legs and walked forwards after Lang Ga.

He sensed a sight fixed on him, and it was just the lad Mao as Shao Xuan looked that way.

Mao was in a big surprise, for he did not expect that there would still be some newly-awakened warrior tagging along in the hunting mission, given that Fei had an accident during last hunting mission. The truth was, because of that accident, even those good-behaved newly-awakened warriors weren't allowed to join this mission. Obviously, Mao did not consider himself as one of the "newly-awakened" warriors.

Shao Xuan looked away after a glimpse at Mao. To avoid making mistakes, he had to follow up with Lang Ga, and how could he spare extra energy to stare at some wimpy kid?

As the hunting team went down the mountain from the top, there were a lot of people gathering on both sides of the Path of Glory. In this hunting team, there were only two newly-awakened warriors, who were just Mao and Shao Xuan, so these two were extremely outstanding among all warriors.

Many people living up in the mountain were not familiar with Shao Xuan. So after they saw Shao Xuan in the team, they only realized that he was the one that got awakened in advance from that ritual ceremony when others told them.

This was yet another occasion for Shao Xuan to be seen in public. So he impressed even those who did not remember Shao Xuan last time. Marching with the hunting team meant that he had the ability. All people respected those with strong abilities.

With the team going down, there were more and more familiar faces. People

were waving their fists towards Shao Xuan, not as threatening him, but as a kind of encouragement.

To Shao Xuan's surprise, children from the cave also gathered by the Path of Glory. They joined in the group to see them off, with admirations in their eyes, and their little fists in the air.

Shao Xuan was a little touched, for they showed gratitude so he didn't help them in vain.

Also, Shao Xuan recognized Sai in the crowd.

However, Sai was brought here by his father against his own will. Sai planned to sleep more in the early morning, but got dragged to the Path of Glory by his old man. He was watching the hunting warriors reluctantly, but the eyes of him suddenly became wide open and his yawn stopped in the middle. He spotted Shao Xuan in the team, and then he looked at his old man stiffly...

As expected, Sai's father narrowed his eyes as he saw Shao Xuan in the team. Of course he planned on strengthening Sai's training, and thinking how to train him harder when they got back.

When the hunting team got to the end of the Path of Glory, it speeded up, until the noise faded away and people behind could not be heard.

Shao Xuan carried all his equipment on his back and followed Lang Ga closely. Here was still the region that tribal warriors would patrol around. Ahead, there was a small flat ground. They would be finally outside of the tribe's territory once they passed the flat ground.

Running on the thick grass, Shao Xuan took the time to look up at the forest on the other side of the flat ground.

Fog rose up like steam, and then stopped in the middle of the air. It looked depressingly heavy since the fog covered a large area of the forest. A sharp and rigid mountain top revealed its face above the fog and cloud, as a black eye looking down at everything.

Before he even went into the forest, Shao Xuan felt a heavy pressure, as if being buried alive.

In fact, before they went into the forest, there was a small break, when leaders assigned their tasks to warriors.

Shao Xuan took the chance to ask Lang Ga a question, who was sorting his ground bows, “So what should I do later?”

Lang Ga smiled, “You don’t bother thinking, all you have to do is to keep up with the team.”



# Chapter 40 – Entering

---

Translated by Sunyancai

After resting a while, the main leader entered the forest, together with forty warriors, while the remaining people waited outside.

The other warriors were divided into five smaller groups. Instead of entering the forest together, they would enter their own hunting areas according to the originally planned routes.

As Shao Xuan was listening to Lang Ga's words, he looked up and saw that Mai was leading Mao in their direction.

"That kid was not in our group. Why is he here now? Wants to change a route?" Ang whispered to some of his pals in a low voice.

"Just a minute ago I saw Mao went to the leader, and right after that, Mai was called upon." Kui, who was pretty close with Lang Ga and Ang, explained. Kui was not much older than Shao Xuan, however, he grew fast after his awakening, so now he was almost the same height as Lang Ga.

Lang Ga and Ang curled their mouths at the same time.

Shao Xuan knew it in his heart, that the leader of the hunting team was Mao's old man. He learnt it from Lang Ga and his friends' talks.

Mao had considerable ability of his own, which was one of the reasons that he could have the chance to tag along with the hunting team. He was indeed much better than most of his peers, and he behaved quite well during the previous hunting mission. The other reason that he could be part of the hunting team was because of his father. With these two factors combined, other

warriors in the hunting team surely had no problem with Mao's presence in the team.

Apparently it was Mao's own idea to come to their group, and the leader had approved that.

"Ah-Xuan, come here and see. You and Mao awakened at the same time, and you are similar in ages. However, Mao has more hunting experience than you, so you guys should communicate more with each other when it's time to hunting." Said Mai.

"Sure." Shao Xuan did not show any reluctant expression, for he had no reason, nor qualification to do that.

To Shao Xuan's surprise, Mao did not reveal the "I am the world's king" kind of attitude that he used to reveal, nor did he look at Shao Xuan provocatively. Instead, he was quite obedient and he paid extra attention when Mai was arranging the plans of their mission. Judging from that, he was indeed much smarter than Fei.

After a while, there were sounds of a wood-whistle from deep in forest. The whistle sounded like a bird or deer's wail, so it didn't feel out of place from the forest.

That was the signal sent from the advance party, meaning that there were no wild beasts ahead that were beyond the warriors' ability, and there was nothing unusual from before. So the follow-up team could advance.

The advance party would send signals of safety or danger after some preliminary scouting, but they would not wait for the follow-up groups to hunt together. Since they were considered the best, their hunting area was not the same as the other groups. Tuo and Keke, that Shao Xuan knew, were both in the advance party.

"Okay, now it's time for us to enter!" Mai called on the others in the group, "As usual, we have to arrive at the other side of the mountain before sunset!"

Shao Xuan looked at the mountain that Mai pointed out, which was a big, tall mountain. If Shao Xuan were in his last life, it would be totally impossible for him to even think about that. However, here, he had already gotten used to it.

The other groups had other hunting routes, and some of them would take detours in other directions, instead of climbing a mountain.

The thirty-warrior team entered the deep forest, while each and every one of them carried a lot of equipment. However, as they were travelling between the trees, not much sound was created.

Above, there were numerous ancient trees, whose stretching branches and wide leaves almost covered the sky. Beneath those trees there were many unidentified shrubs clustering together. Between the spaces of the shrubs, there were roots of giant ancient trees exposing themselves above the ground.

Warriors all jumped on the trunk from the ground, and then energetically leaped among the branches. About thirty people jumping over one by one, while the branches merely shook slightly. The sound of leaves in the forest did not attract any creature's special attention.

Shao Xuan followed the man ahead of him and jumped from the ground to the trunk. And a short time later he jumped on a huge vine from the branch where he stood at.

The giant vine was a few meters wide as it wound around the ancient tree. There was a layer of moss covering its surface. Moist air made the moss as smooth as velvet, and one could easily slip and fall down when stepping on the moss. However, if one could keep his balance, it was a nice slide.

Sliding on the vine and moving fast, Shao Xuan could feel the fresh scent filling in his nose. That was the scent of the plants, with flowers' fragrance mixed in. Aside from that, with the high temperature, moist air lifted up all the smells of the creatures living in the forest...

That was the breath of an untainted forest, full of life, danger and thrill. Smelling the air, people's body hair seemed to tremble with excitement!

A millstone-sized oblate insect was lying on the vine ahead, with three rows of pattern-like eyes. As the insect crawled, the three rows of eyes blinked as it was scanning around the surroundings with its eyes.

The hunting group did not slow down because of the obstacle ahead. Without

any irregular sound, Shao Xuan saw that insect be pushed away from the vine and thrown down.

Whoosh!

A big bird flew below the vine so promptly that it could barely be seen. And the falling insect was picked up by the flying bird.

With the marching of the hunting group, the light was sometimes dim and sometimes bright. The vine arched high and then fell into the jungle again.

Above, coiled around a bulky branch, there was a bucket-width wide serpent, with colorful patterns on its body. However, that was nothing special in this forest.

Perhaps the serpent was full already, as it seemed lazy. As the hunting warriors were sliding down the branch on the vine, it looked down at them as it stuck its two-pronged snake tongue out, staring at the people passing by without emotion.

Shao Xuan felt the icy sight of the snake ahead, but kept following up with Lang Ga. Since the people ahead did not mind that snake above, of course he did not need to pay extra attention. Qua experience, Shao Xuan was merely a greenhorn. He still had to learn when to strike and when not, so he just followed.

Now Shao Xuan was in the middle part of the group, and there were other warriors behind him.

The warriors after him originally figured that since it was Shao Xuan's first hunting mission, perhaps he wouldn't adjust himself to it so easily. So they could lend a hand if Shao Xuan could not keep up the rhythm or slip by mistake. However, unexpectedly, Shao Xuan could follow the group closely, without making a single mistake!

Along the path, Shao Xuan had seen a lot of game. Some of them were giant bears, also some things that he could not name, while some of them were small beasts running among the bushes. However, the hunting group did not slow down or even look at those animals, but kept marching towards the mountain that Mai pointed at earlier.

As they got closer to the mountain, the species of the plants changed. There were less ancient trees and the hunting group did not go through the trees anymore.

Seeing that Lang Ga and the others ahead slowed down, Shao Xuan slowed down accordingly.

Mai gestured towards the warriors behind him, so seven or eight warriors immediately spread out in the near surroundings to see if there were any dangerous fierce animals around.

After the safety was confirmed, Mai told the hunting group to take a short rest.

The lined-up group changed its formation and became more relaxed. But no one was just standing and all were preparing and sorting their equipment.

“Pretty tired, huh?...”

When Lang Ga was sorting his ground bows, he turned his head to ask Shao Xuan if he was tired. When tired, one should drink and eat some food as a supplement for the physical strength consumption. Lang Ga planned to tell him that he should not put so much pressure on himself, for after all, they had marched from the edge of the forest to deep down its center, and one would need to stay focused to avoid making mistakes. With tense nerves, one could easily get exhausted both mentally and physically. For some newly-awakened warriors, it was indeed a real task. Even Mao, who was publicly-acknowledged as the best among his peer, was now a little short of breath.

However, Lang Ga’s caring words got stuck in his throat when he saw Shao Xuan. That lad acted as if nothing happened. Not only was he not short of breath, he had the energy to pay attention to that tree civet on that tree!

# Chapter 41 – Black wind

---

Translated by Sunyancai

It was Shao Xuan's first time seeing this little beast, which was called a tree civet. It was not much larger than an adult's palm, and among its grey fur there were some brown lines mixed in. On its round hairy head, there were two big black eyes, and it seemed particularly innocent when it stared at people with those eyes. The ears on both sides were slightly droopy. It squatted on a branch which was at least ten meters high, with his arms around the trunk and eyes fixed down on the people below.

"Don't look at it. That little thing is not good to eat." Lang Ga whispered to Shao Xuan. As they were taking the short break, talking was not forbidden, but all people talked in a low voice.

Generally speaking, people in the tribe were not picky about a food's flavor, and they would swallow down those unsavory foods as long as they could provide energy. When evaluated as "not good to eat", probably that thing was not only unsavory, but was probably also harmful to one's body.

"Aren't they afraid of people?" Shao Xuan asked.

"Many beasts would not feel afraid when they first see people. Instead, they would be more curious. However, if you show any trace of killing intent, it would be totally different." Lang Ga said, as he lifted his ground bow with the arrow pointed at the tree civet on the tree.

One minute earlier the tree civet seemed harmless and innocent, but now it kept its mouth wide open, and looked rather ferocious, with a mouthful of sharp teeth.

Lang Ga did not shoot towards the tree civet, but lowered his weapon and ignored it.

“Little meat and not good to eat. It’s sound is also creepy.” Lang Ga looked away after saying that, and continued to work on his ground bows to see if there’s any damage.

When Lang Ga had left, the tree civet restored its normal appearance.

A finger-length flying worm flew near it, with his wings flapping. On its surface there was a layer of thin scales, which reflected the sunlight. It was so sparkly and it flew really fast in the air. One second it was at one spot and the next second it was at another spot, as if it could move to another place instantly.

Whoosh!

The tree civet waved its arm and reached out his paw in the air, like it knew the place where the flying worm was headed.

Within the blink of an eye, the flying worm was caught in the tree civet’s paw.

Shao Xuan noticed that the tree civet twisted a bit on the flying worm’s wings to break them, and then held the worm in its paw as if it was a breadstick. One bite after another, the worm went into the tree civet’s belly, and the tree civet stared down at Shao Xuan as it ate.

When there was only a tail of the flying worm left, the tree civet stopped biting. After taking a look at the remaining tail in its paw, the tree civet looked down at Shao Xuan and then quickly threw the tail towards him.

Feeling the flying worm’s remains flying towards his face, Shao Xuan dodged and the worm remains missed him by half a step.

“Jia, jia, Jia!”

The tree civet began to haul.

Shao Xuan thought that perhaps his dodging earlier made the tree civet angry, while he saw that not far away, Ang acted slightly. Then Shao Xuan looked at the tree civet’s direction, but only to find that it had already left, as if it was avoiding something.

Ang rushed towards the direction that the tree civet fled, and he climbed onto a tree nimbly. On his back there were five short spears which were only half the length of normal spears, to be used as javelins.

The others in the hunting group all quieted down, and they even lowered their breaths. If not having seen with his own eyes, Shao Xuan would never have expected that there were so many people staying here.

Ang seemed to see something and he silently pulled out a short spear quickly and prepared to throw it out. However, the moment before he was going to throw, he stopped and showed a gesture to the others.

Mai thought about it and waved to call Ang back.

Ang climbed down the tree with regret on his face. At the meantime, all the others in the hunting group began to find convex stones and tree roots to hide themselves. Naturally Shao Xuan did the same.

In the time of two breaths, Shao Xuan saw something fox-like jump out from the bushes. It ran towards a direction after sniffing around for a second.

Lang Ga told Shao Xuan to keep on waiting.

After a while, Shao Xuan heard some scratching noises. It was some creature walking and rubbing the leaves and branches.

A seven-meter-high creature slowly came into their sights. It had brown fur, thick limbs, and an extremely strong tail. It looked ferocious, but judging from its slowness and heavy body, it seemed a little lazy and foolish.

After sniffing with his nose, it went beside some trees and stood up on its hind legs, while its strong tail pushed against the ground, and formed a triangle with the legs. As it stood up, its forelegs showed the sharp claws with giant hook-like sickles. Its claws quickly hooked over the branches ahead, and cut the branches with leaves, like he was harvesting wheat.

That was a leaf-eating animal, but judging from Mai's reaction, Shao Xuan knew that it was not easy to be dealt with. Recalling the hunting stories that he had heard before, Shao Xuan figured that the big animal ahead should be the



giant-claw beast. Although this giant-claw beast appeared to be big enough in Shao Xuan's eyes, in fact, this was merely a juvenile one, for adult giant-claw beasts should be bigger in size.

Also, it only looked lazy and heavy on the outside. When faced with danger or threat, they could be really quick to react, and its giant claws could easily uproot a tree.

In fact, giant-claw beasts were also in the hunting list of the hunting group, however, Mai did not command the warriors to attack it.

Those trees were not tall enough, and as soon as it finished eating all those fresh leaves, and as the remaining ones didn't arouse his interest, it left walking on his four limbs, still behaving like a lazy animal.

When it had left, Mai led the others to continue to climb up the mountain.

As they were marching to the top, Lang Ga examined a few traps underway that he set up in the past. Inside them there were some pitiful animals. Since they did not fall in the traps long time ago, they were still alive, and were executed by warriors in the hunting group in the blink of an eye.

These were no large traps, so the animals they caught were relatively small in size.

Lang Ga shared his experience with Shao Xuan while he was adjusting those traps.

Pointing at the warriors dealing with the preys, Lang Ga explained, "After you catch something, you have to examine it first to see if it's ill. For example, that animal we caught earlier had uncolored eyes and bald spots in his fur. If you cut it open, you would smell a funny smell from its meat. Even if the prey lived, it wouldn't be alive for long. Any warrior would share its fate if he ate its meat."

On the other side, the warriors in charge of handling the preys had already promptly skinned those animals, and ripped out all their guts. The animals were sliced into meat straps and were put in bags, on which some grass essence was smeared to cover the smell.

Mai guided the group and he focused on leading them to climb over the mountain. So along the way, they did not hunt for large-sized animals.

The climate on the mountaintop was not as mild as the climate down below. Snow glistened in the sun, while one could clearly see the large basin on the other side of the mountain.

Finally, before sunset, the hunting team arrived at the other side of the mountain and they reached a cave in the mountain side, which was in fact a stronghold of the hunting team. Their hunting group would spend the night inside.

It was naturally easier since they had a shelter for the night.

After a day's intense journey, warriors relaxed their nerves, since they could finally get some rest.

"A bear used to live in this cave. Our hunting team put it to rest forever and took the place for our own use." Lang Ga explained the cave's origin to Shao Xuan.

"Oh, by the way, Lang Ga, how did Ah-Fei make a mistake during the last hunting mission?"

A minute ago, Lang Ga was proudly bragging about his hunting deeds, now he sighed with his smile gone and disappeared. He approached Shao Xuan and complained in a low voice, "Hey, you'd better be the judge. Ah-Fei could have messed with everything in the forest, but finally he chose to mess around with the Thorn Black Wind!"

Black Wind did not refer to some kind of a beast, but a general term that the tribe's people used to call those prey who preferred to hunt at night. So normally they would call them "something Black Wind", while Thorn Black Wind was just one kind of them.

After sunset, the temperature began to drop, and warriors used a giant stone to block the entrance of the cave. However, chilly wind still poured in from the edges. Inside the cave there was a bonfire, and with so many people huddled together, it was not so cold. If he looked at the sky outside, Shao Xuan knew he could see two crescent moons in the sky.

Lang Ga and the others said that tomorrow's weather would be fine.

While outside the cave, in the silent forest during the night hours, nocturnal

animals began to wake up in that basin, which seemed to be peaceful when seen from the outside.

In a middle-sized lake located in the mountain foot area, there were waves on the surface of the water. A giant body quietly emerged from the water and crawled towards the bank. Those nocturnal animals who were drinking water silently fled away for safety.

Instead of chasing after those little preys, the giant beast stood still by the pool, and waited patiently for the water to drip down its fur and for the wind to dry its body. It only began to move until the moonlight no longer reflected off its dry body, and its giant figure soon disappeared in the dark.

# Chapter 42 – Wild boar

---

Translated by Sunyancai

At dawn, all the warriors in the cave recovered their energy after a night's rest, and were taking inventory of the equipment they planned to take for hunting later.

They all brought a lot of stone tools from the tribe, and there were some spare stone tools stored in the cave. However, they could never take all the things when hunting, so they needed to select only a part of them.

Aside from old Ke's sabre, Shao Xuan brought a long spear, and carried three short spears on his back. Compared with the others, Shao Xuan did not bring much equipment. After all, it was only his first hunting mission, and the first thing he should do was to adjust and observe.

After they ate something for breakfast, Mai pushed away the giant stone that blocked the entrance of the cave.

The sun had not risen completely, and moist wind mixed with the fresh cool air from outside blew into the cave, which felt brisk and invigorating.

The location of the cave was relatively remote. Not far ahead there was a steep slope, where one could probably reach the mountain foot directly if he rolled down from there. There were not many trees around, nor were there any animals.

Outside the cave, Shao Xuan could see the mountain surrounded by clouds, and the basin down there. If you ignored the hidden threats and ferocious animals, the forest was pretty beautiful.

“Before hunting, you have to know the preys’ habits. For example, small preys like rabbits mostly come out for food at night, and they tend to hide themselves during daylight.” Lang Ga said to Shao Xuan as they went down the mountain. In the meantime, he pointed out at some weeds and plants with bite marks left by wild rabbits which were active at night.

“Wild sheep normally are barely seen around this mountain, and they only exist in the other mountains. But sometimes one or two of them would come here. During wintertime, they come out for food in the daylight, while in summer, they tend to come out in the mornings and evenings, and hide in the valley at noon to rest. I will show you after a few days when we get to the basin. Also there are other small-sized preys that prefer to live in the edges of the forest. During daylight they would hide in the bushes, or under trees, resting, and come out in the mornings and evenings...”

Shao Xuan carefully listened to Lang Ga’s words, and he tried to memorize all of them by heart. That was the knowledge that one needed to know if they wanted to survive in here. Only by learning about all the preys’ habits could a hunting warrior know when to chase and when to stop, so as to improve the efficiency.

“Aside from that, when in search of prey, you should first take a close look at the trails, such as the fresh scratches on the trees and clear footprints on the ground. They all mean that lately the prey was in that particular area. In general, animals may still use this old path as long as you do not wantonly destroy or damage the surrounding environment... If they sense your presence, you should just hold your breath and be still, just as when you met that tree civet yesterday. Perhaps the animals haven’t seen humans before, and their curiosity would be stronger than their fear. By the way, for newly-awakened warriors like yourself, you are not strong enough to hunt down those large-sized beasts. You’d better avoid those ones, especially ferocious beasts, or else you would become the prey instead of the hunter.”

Just then, Lang Ga became quiet and observed the traces on the ground and the grass nearby closely, “A wild boar had been here.”

Along the path there were a lot of traces, Lang Ga collected them all, and went to Mai for discussion, “There’s a little boar nearby. Since we have not

entered the center of the hunting area, can I take Ah-Xuan and the others for a warm-up exercise?”

“Alright.” Mai said to Lang Ga and then discussed a few words with Qiao beside him.

Qiao and Mai were wife and husband. When Shao Xuan first heard Qiao’s name, he joked with Lang Ga that they were doomed to be a couple, however, it was a shame that Lang Ga could not get Shao Xuan’s joke at all. [EN: Mai means wheat and Qiao means buckwheat]

In their hunting group there were only seven female warriors, and Qiao was the strongest among them. Qiao and Mai were both mid-level totemic warriors, and in the past they would always separately lead a dozen warriors and go hunting. After, they would then meet up with each other.

According to the strategy that she worked out with Mai before, Qiao led a group of warriors and they left to chase the giant-antler deer.

Mai continued on the original path with the others.

“Lang Ga, you take Ang and the others to find that boar, while I take the rest to check out the other side. Do not go too deep into the forest.”

“Got it!”

There were a lot of traps that Lang Ga set on the mountain, from rope traps, falling stone traps, to other kinds like sharp knife traps. Lang Ga pointed them out to Shao Xuan so that he did not fall in any of them.

Soon, Lang Ga discovered that wild boar’s tracks, so he told Shao Xuan and Mao to wait here, as he went to drive out that boar.

Shao Xuan stood on a tree while watching the surroundings vigorously. Even though Mai and Lang Ga both said there were no giant ferocious beasts nearby, he still had to be cautious of the worms and snakes.

Not afar, there came roars of the boar, and the sound got nearer as time went by. Apparently Lang Ga’s driving worked, and that boar did not run towards other directions.

While paying attention to the approaching sound, Shao Xuan carried his long

spear with his left hand, then pulled out a short spear and held it in his right hand for later use.

“Later you can see what I do to hunt it down. For some preys, you could just trap them down, and then take their lives with a long spear.” Mao said, standing on another tree. In his tone there was obvious pride. Since there was no one else here, that fellow tore down his mask and behaved like an experienced hunting warrior.

Shao Xuan glanced at him while still paying attention to the approaching sound.

Lang Ga and Mai both said that it was only a little wild boar, but judging from the sound it created, Shao Xuan did not think it was little at all. The wild boar rushing out from the bushes weighed at least two hundred kilos! It seemed like a bear at first look!

But apparently, that size could only be considered as a small one in the eyes of Lang Ga.

That wild boar was running fast.

Also, it seemed to sense the ambush ahead, so it turned to another direction. Shao Xuan hurriedly ran after it, while Mao from the other tree ran ahead of Shao Xuan.

Whoosh!

A short spear flew at the wild boar like an arrow.

Whiz!

The spearhead went into the ground, while it missed the wild boar by centimeters.

Mao reacted quickly, as the second spear arrived there right after the first spear. Suddenly a loud roar came out from the boar's throat.

The second short spear went into its neck and the spearhead had half entered its skin.

The wild boar roared loudly, and rushed towards a tall tree beside him with the short spear in its neck. When it got near the tree, it rubbed down the spear in its neck on the trunk.

There was only a little blood on the spearhead, and obviously, Mao's earlier throw did not cause much harm to that wild boar.

He threw twice yet neither of them worked. Mao felt pretty upset, for earlier, he was too eager to act, which cost him the best timing to throw. He couldn't even complete his third throw, so he just continued chasing the wild boar with a short spear grasped in his hand. He did not find that Shao Xuan had any intention to act, so he figured that as long as he did not miss the third throw, he could still be better than Shao Xuan.

For the hunting warriors on their first hunting mission, even when they had heard plenty of hunting stories and they were quite solid in theory, they would find that during the real hunting mission, there was little time to think. So either would they be too hasty to miss the best timing, or would they be too cautious and waste the best timing to strike. They would wait until the last minute and only in the last minute would they find that the opportunity had slipped away.

Because of that, in the eyes of Mao, even though he missed the best opportunity, he still had one shot on the boar. Unlike Shao Xuan, who did not act during the whole process.

Instead of slowing down after it had been pierced by that short spear, the wild boar speeded up, as if it was his way of life.

At the time Mao was about to strike for the third time, there was a slight sound coming from behind him. The next moment, there was a spear pinned on the ground. The spear almost hit the boar's hoof, and its shaft stopped in front of the boar's paws. Obviously that wild boar also did not expect to be blocked like that, so it was tripped by it. Before it could have a second to react, a second short spear arrived and this time it was right behind its raised foreleg!

The wooden shaft broke as the wild boar struggled to rush forward, while the wild boar got tripped down because of the two short spears in a row. It rolled over on the ground, and just when it was about to get up, a figure from the tree beside him jumped out and rushed down to shoot.



The long spear was like a shooting star and fell down from the air directly into the wild boar's neck. That was just where the first wound was!

Shrill screeching sounds, even more shrill than before, pricked people's ears.

With the long spear inside the boar's neck, Shao Xuan did not pull it out immediately. Instead, he pushed the spear deeper inside!

Puff!

The spearhead nearly pierced through the wild boar's neck, while its roar suddenly stopped. Only its four limbs struggled, but it was doomed already, and the strength of its struggle was fading.

# Chapter 43 – Advanced prey

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Lang Ga and the others soon gathered around the wild boar. In fact, they were behind them and were watching all along. Originally, they assumed that it would take them some time to take down that wild boar, however, unexpectedly, these two kids killed that beast quite fast.

“Not bad.” Lang Ga said as he looked at the not yet dead wild boar.

When using a stone spear, one had to be really quick and accurate. Also, the strength must be sufficient, or else it would hardly be effective, not to mention piercing through the thick skin of the wild boar. Even the best stone tool needed to be used properly to work. However, Lang Ga felt that these two kids had already mastered the skills of using spears, judging from the earlier circumstances. Lang Ga and the others secretly nodded in their mind.

While Mao stood there, mind blank. He did not expect that Shao Xuan could act so fast, given that he had not joined a single hunting mission before! Actually, it was just a moment between him tripping the wild boar and sticking that long spear into its neck.

Was that really his first time hunting?

Not only Mao, Lang Ga and the others were sighing at heart. No wonder Mai allowed Shao Xuan to tag along this time. Indeed, that boy had the talent in him.

In fact, Shao Xuan was merely acting all by instinct. It was his first hunting experience, so naturally there was nothing as experience. However, it was just when he chased after the wild boar, there was a moment when he felt that it

would be good to strike. So without hesitation, he activated his totemic power and tossed out two short spears in a row, after which he put it down with a fatal strike with that long spear. If the wild boar didn't trip, it would've been rather difficult for him to accurately stab the long spear through its wound.

Shao Xuan looked at the broken shafts in his hand and frowned a little. Two short spears and one long spear all broke down. The first two were cracked by the wild boar, while the long spear broke because it could not bear the pressure when Shao Xuan made the final strike.

So it seemed that aside from the stone spearheads, he should pay extra attention to the wooden material on stone tools.

"Don't worry. There is plenty of good timber in the forest. We can chop a few trees down and take them back in the cave for handles." Lang Ga comforted him.

It was true that in the few mountains around their tribe, there was not much good timber. There were fine stones, but when it came to timber, it was not so satisfying. So every time when hunting teams went on a mission, they would bring more spearheads with them, while making the handles with timber from the forests.

When dealing with relatively larger beasts, normally Lang Ga and the others would first bleed them, and pour the blood into the containers they brought with them, for later use. The containers usually were made from gourd-like plants. The blood was drinkable, and meat would be more properly stored if it was bled out.

At that time, Lang Ga still remembered to pass on his wisdom to Shao Xuan, "Generally speaking, wild boars have a rather fixed living area, and they would rest in the brushwood near the water. Their routes for food rarely change, and they would only find new places when there's no food in their old habitats or when faced with danger. When it gets colder on the mountain, they would move to the valley where it's warmer and bathe in the sun..."

Lang Ga and the others also intended to skin it and take out all its organs while its body was still warm. However, unexpectedly, they heard a few sounds of whistles before they could do that.

It was a signal from Mai, telling Lang Ga and the others to come, for they had encountered large-sized animals.

There was no time for skinning, Lang Ga and the others seriously looked at each other and began to pack their things to rush to that direction.

“Just leave that boar and keep up with us!” Lang Ga said.

Shao Xuan wasted no time on that boar and without a single look at the game on the ground, he followed up closely with Lang Ga and the others.

There were different rankings of prey, as different levels of animals meant that they contained different scales of energy. In the same size of meat, the one from an advanced prey would keep you fuller for longer. However, if you ate the meat from an inferior prey, you wouldn't feel as full and after some time running or walking, you would feel hungry again. That was also the reason why more warriors preferred to hunt for the advanced prey in the forest, and they especially focused on the ferocious beasts, instead of normal beasts.

Surely there were some reasons for referring certain kinds of animals as ferocious beasts. For example, the Black Wind that Lang Ga mentioned last night was considered as one of the ferocious beast. It's just that no one in the tribe dared to mess around with a Black Wind easily, for it was nearly impossible to be hunted down.

Intermittent bangs resounded closer and closer, as if some giant animal was stepping on the ground. The earth beneath their feet trembled, together with the sound of breaking branches. Many small-sized animals and beasts were fleeing for their survival, and trying to leave that dangerous pace.

“You two, keep your distance!” Lang Ga prevented Shao Xuan and Mao from going nearer, and then promptly went towards the sound's direction together with the others.

Shao Xuan gasped when he got to see that creature.

Finally, he learnt why Mai and Lang Ga called the earlier wild boar a “little” one. Compared with the huge monster ahead, the wild boar that they killed earlier was like a toy car, while this monster was a tough armored vehicle.

“Four-fanged wild boar! It is a four-fanged!” Mao standing beside him got

quite excited and surprised. After all, it was not easy for them to encounter such a prey. Unexpectedly, he saw such a monster at only his second hunting trip! How could he not be excited?

Normally, male wild boars would have a pair of upward turning fangs, while the ten-meter mountain-like giant boar had four pairs of them. Aside from the huge fangs revealed from its mouth like normal boars, the other three pairs were on its face. The most upfront pair was located on its forehead, and a little shorter than the other three pairs.

The four pairs of fangs turned to the same direction and almost formed a shield, which could easily crush down the tree in front of it.

Shao Xuan wondered if those fangs and horns affected its ability to see things.

According to the classification that people in the tribe had for wild boars, a three-fanged boar could be considered as ferocious beast, let alone this four-fanged one.

The bristles on its neck stood up like steel needles because of anger and excitement, given that the four-fanged boar was sieged.

When Shao Xuan set his eyes on that four-fanged wild boar, it had quite a few spears on its body already. Those spears obviously didn't pierce deep through its skin with only a single thrust. They again pushed in hard after the spearhead entered into its body. There were also a few broken spears, with only the spearheads or part of the handle exposed in the air. That was because their handles broke under too much strength.

Many figures were pretty active around the wild boar.

Mai moved his body to dodge the thick trunk thrown by that wild boar, and in a moment all the strength inside his body gathered together and reached the peak. Mai leaped and stepped on one broken handle which then pierced deeper inside the boar's body, and slammed at the boar with his clenched fist as if hitting on it with a Warhammer, which spread out a fierce pressure!

The spot that got slammed, dented in immediately and its flesh nearby vibrated like ripples.

The wild boar sprang up with a loud and clear howl, as if it could tear up all the space. Its big snout blasted out a gust of hurricane-like wind, whirling around the surroundings, which caused all the branches to get blown off by force and fly away.

Naturally, Shao Xuan who was standing not afar experienced that strong howl.

It was so fu\*king... smelly!

The four-fanged wild boar literally became anxious because of all the punches it bore. Its rigid big hoofs crashed the convex stones along its way, and destroyed almost all obstacles in front of it. It had the momentum to kill and sweep away anyone or anything, and it ran even faster than before.

“Do not let it get near the water!” Mai shouted.

It took him a lot of efforts to drive that big thing into that forest, so he couldn't let it escape! Let alone that there were some dangerous creatures hidden by the pool that they would never want to mess around with. Luckily, those big ones usually do not come out during daylight.

Fifteen totemic warriors, among which five of them were mid-level warriors, oddly they did not manage to stop that four-fanged wild boar. Fortunately, Qiao and the others rushed to their assistance at the whistle, and joined the hunting circle.

Hammers, axes, and stone chains were all used in the hunting, while numerous spears were broken during the process. Finally, they stopped the four-fanged wild boar before it could escape the forest.

Shao Xuan's racing heartbeat calmed down by the sound of that boar hitting the ground, and the tense nerves relaxed immediately. He ran towards Lang Ga after receiving a gesture of “safety” from him.

Shao Xuan emptied his container of that little boar's blood, and refilled it with the blood from this four-fanged wild boar, which was much more nutritious. Lang Ga told Shao Xuan to drink one drop at a time, because newly-awakened warriors could not take more.

Since they had captured such a high quality prey, the hunting group stopped

chasing other animals. After a simple treatment on the boar, people carried it to the cave in the mountain side.

It was nearly noon when they finally got back to the cave. To hunt and kill that giant wild boar, everyone was feeling a little exhausted. They became very tired when they relaxed after the high intensity of using their body strength in such a short time.

“Luckily, we prevented him from running to the pool, or it would cause so much trouble if the Thorn Black Wind was bothered.” Lang Ga still had a lingering fear, when recalling the circumstances they met last time.

The others shared his feeling and all of them felt lucky to have stopped that four-fanged wild boar in time.

After having the roasted meat of that four-fanged wild boar for lunch, warriors in the hunting group decided to take a rest.

Shao Xuan felt that there was a warm surge running through his body after he ate, which was quite comfortable and cozy. That was the advantage for having advanced prey. All the consumed strength was gradually recovering, and at the same time, he felt sleepier than ever.

“Now go to sleep and have a rest. Newly-awakened warriors like yourself need more time to digest the meat with high energy content.” Said Mai.

Qiao said that she had traced down the whereabouts of a giant-antler deer herd, and they planned to hunt them down in the afternoon. Since it was a large herd, Mai would take people to help, and he decided to leave Lang Ga and four other people to stay back in the cave. At the same time, they guarded the place, they could take care of the two sleeping kids, who were digesting the boar.

When he woke up, Shao Xuan found that there were only five warriors, including Lang Ga, left in the cave. After sipping some water, Shao Xuan felt he was still sleepy. Since he checked and confirmed about Mai and the other’s schedule, he planned to go back to his nap.

At that time, Ang rushed in from outside, with a pretty serious face.

“Just now I heard the howling of a Thorn Black Wind! It seems that Mai and

the others got in trouble on their way back to the cave!”

“How would a Thorn Black Wind come out during daylight? Now the sun is still in the sky!” Lang Ga and the others almost jumped up at the news.

Even though now the sun was not up in the south, it was not even dusk, while normally Thorn Black Winds only woke up at night, but also very late at night!

“Do you think it is the one from last time and it came for revenge? Perhaps it came out of the water in advance, just to get back at Mai and the others?” Ang sounded quite worried.

“Shall we go and help?” someone proposed.

Lang Ga opened his mouth, but said nothing as he glimpsed at Shao Xuan and Mao lying beside him.

“It’s okay. You should go, we are pretty safe in the cave.” Said Shao Xuan. His condition did not allow him to tag along, and he knew he would be a burden if he insisted to go with them.

“Yes, you should go.” Mao woke up, too, “A Thorn Black Wind is never easy to be dealt with.”

Even though Mao did not join Mai’s hunting group last time, he had heard from others that last time it took the joint effort of Mai’s group to get rid of that stubborn big one. It was not easy.

“Okay, then. Shao Xuan and Mao, you two stay in the cave!”

Lang Ga and the other four warriors went out of the cave and used a giant stone to block its entrance. Since there were other vents inside, the two kids wouldn’t suffocate. As long as Shao Xuan and Mao remained inside the cave, it was indeed pretty safe.



# Chapter 44 – Curious

---

Translated by Sunyancai

After Lang Ga and the others left, Mao nervously walked back and forth in the cave. After pacing for a while, he rubbed his head in frustration, because he still didn't know what to do. He looked around to find something to distract him, and noticed Shao Xuan was sitting on a straw mat behind him, cross-legged, staring blankly.

“Hey, there!” Mao shouted at his direction, “How can you not be worried?”

Mao had no good feelings about Shao Xuan, but it was not the time to turn every personal grudge into a battle, let alone that there were only two of them in the cave right now. Without someone to talk to, he would feel extremely worried, and he assumed that he would feel better if he had something to do or could chat with someone.

Shao Xuan looked up at him and said, “Would it help them if I worry? For people like you and I, we would be asking for death if we go out, because we would become targets before we could get close enough to that beast. Should we go out and be their burden?”

“Have I said anything about going out?” Mao shouted angrily. Even though he did want to go out and see what was happening, he felt embarrassed since Shao Xuan just poked holes in his thoughts and laid out the flaws plainly.

“So if we're not going out, what's your plan?” As he finished the question, Shao Xuan pointed to those meat chunks that Lang Ga chopped, yet did not have the time to roast, “Instead of worrying and doing nothing, you'd be better off roasting the meat.”

“No!” Mao was furious, seeing Shao Xuan behaving that way. He felt that Shao Xuan was a heartless person, and Mai and the others had all given him kindness for nothing.

Shao Xuan did not continue to pay attention to Mao, but in fact, deep down in his heart, he was not as calm as he seemed. He knew that something was happening, so he felt frustrated that his hands were tied and there was nothing he could do to help.

There was a small bow beside Shao Xuan that Lang Ga made, which had vines twined tightly together. The rope used as a bowstring had been soaked with animal blood and some kind of grass extract. It was pretty firm and durable, and the smell of grass perfectly covered up the smell of blood. So it was quite difficult to be discovered when hidden in the grass or trees, since it just smelled like plants. Although these kinds of bows were not very lethal to the beasts in this forest, they were very effective when used to drive animals in a certain direction. Earlier today, Lang Ga used those bows and traps to drive the little wild boar in Shao Xuan and Mao’s direction.

It was such a pity that these bows were too small, and that there weren’t sufficient materials to make stronger bows and arrows which could bear the erupted strength of a totemic warrior. Ground bows, narrow spaces, traps, all these things had little effect on large-sized animals or Ferocious Beasts, so most of the time, hunting relied on human skill.

Shao Xuan sighed silently. He wondered how Mai and the others were, and secretly hoped that this time there would be no casualties...

Hunting was filled with risks. One second it would be calm and peaceful, yet a second later one could be standing on the edge of a cliff, and might accidentally fall into the abyss, with no remains to be found.

Compared to that, life inside the tribe was cozy.

No wonder that old Ke had said that one should definitely enter the woods if he wanted to accomplish something. Living inside the tribe would never provide you with such pressure. However, in the forest, the cruel law of nature was “kill or be killed”, and you had to constantly fight for survival.

In this place, ferocious beasts outnumbered humans by a lot, and it was

extremely hard if one wanted to obtain food and survive in this dangerous forest based on his his own strength. Indeed, warriors from the tribe had their own special skills, but it was rare for a single warrior to be hunting alone in the depths of the forest. Individuals could only survive using teamwork and relying on each others' strengths. For example, when they were dealing with the four-fanged wild boar together earlier, and now when they are fighting against the Thorn Black Wind together.

Becoming an experienced hunter from a new warrior was a long and arduous path.

Shao Xuan decided to stop thinking about this, for he knew it was not helpful at all. He cut off a small piece of meat from one of the bloody meat chunks beside him, and pierced a little hole through it with a stone spear. Then, Shao Xuan skewered that meat with a half-meter long stick and began to roast it above the fire. After searing the outer layer, Shao Xuan put the stick higher above the fire to prevent the meat oil from leaking out.

Mao walked in circles, attempting to alleviate the anxiety he was feeling due to not know what to do. As he looked in Shao Xuan's direction, he asked in a bitter tone, "What are you doing now? Roasting the meat to eat by yourself?"

If he was roasting the meat for the hunting team's later use, he would not have roasted just a small piece of it. However, judging from Shao Xuan's actions, he obviously cut off such a small part of it to eat himself!

"Yes." Shao Xuan answered slightly. He was indeed a little hungry, and he felt that the energy he got from the last piece of meat he ate had already been used up. Since they had nothing to do for now, he chose to stuff himself first, since man can't do anything on an empty stomach

Mao's face twitched. He was still a little stuffed at the moment. Earlier, when they ate two pieces of meat of the same size, Mai had calculated the amount they could eat safely to avoid indigestion. If he did not move much, he wouldn't need to eat for the rest of the day. However, Shao Xuan was roasting a piece of meat again!

"You should stuff yourself to death!" Mao said with resentment.

Shao Xuan ignored Mao's comment, but he did feel hungry despite not having

done much.

By the time Shao Xuan finished roasting the meat, Mai and the others hadn't returned yet. After he finished eating the second piece of meat, the feeling of warmth and drowsiness hit him again. Originally he had planned to wait for Mai and the other warriors to come back, but with his eyelids' getting heavier and heavier, he felt that his brain was full of chaos. Shao Xuan could not resist the sleep anymore, so he said to Mao, who was still walking in circles by the entrance, "I need to get some sleep now. Wake me up if anything abnormal happens. Do not go out by yourself."

Seeing that Shao Xuan was about to go to sleep, Mao became even more furious. He pointed at Shao Xuan with his finger and tried hard to ease his pounding heart. He could teach him a lesson by fighting, but eventually, he calmed down.

While Shao Xuan was sleeping soundly, Mao kept on pacing. After pacing for a while, the meat he ate before was digested some more, causing Mao to feel sleepy too. Mai and the others still hadn't returned, and he could not go out. With no other options, he laid down by Shao Xuan's side and fell into a deep sleep while still worried.

It grew darker outside, and the sun was about to set. There were only slight traces of lights on the mountains remaining, and they were fading away.

The noisy forest slowly quieted down. Almost all the diurnal animals returned to their shelters, while nocturnal animals began to come out.

In the meantime, Mai and the others were pretty upset for being blocked down at the mountain foot.

Normally, Thorn Black Winds had a strong sense of territory, and only one Thorn Black Wind would live in a certain region. There was only one lake down at the mountain foot area, and the surroundings of the pool would be considered by a Thorn Black Wind as its own territory. So in principle, there should be only one Thorn Black Wind here, and they had encountered an adult Thorn Black Wind during the last hunting mission.

However, now, there were two adult Thorn Black Winds blocking their way!

Lang Ga and the other four warriors lowered the pressure when they joined them. They even brought some herbs from the cave on the mountainside. Some of the herbs were used to treat wounds, while others could be used to deal with the Thorn Black Wind. The mixed herbs from the Shaman smelled terrible, slowing down the Thorn Black Wind's attacks.

Faced with two Thorn Black Winds, the thirty-person hunting group was still at a disadvantage. Luckily, those two Thorn Black Winds could not deal with them either. So most of the time, these beasts would only watch them from afar, but they would go and stop anyone who attempted to run up the mountainside.

"Mai, I feel like something's wrong!" Qiao, back to back with Mai, stared at that Thorn Black Wind hiding behind a few trees afar and said in a hurry.

"You almost chopped down the tail of the Thorn Black Wind last time. But based on my observation, none of these two's tails have any wounds."

During the last hunting mission, Mai's hunting group spared no efforts and they at last drove that crazy Thorn Black Wind away. Mai had even almost chopped off its tail.

The wound should have been near the tip of its tail, and it had been only thirty days since it was inflicted. Even if Thorn Black Winds had the ability to recover quickly, it was still not possible for there to be no mark at all. However, these two Thorn Black Winds clearly had no traces of wounds on their tails at all!

# Chapter 45 – Creatures outside the cave

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Mai had also noticed that, and he was wondering about it as well.

He was certain that neither of the two Thorn Black Winds were the one whose tail he slashed last time. No totemic warrior would mess with a Thorn Black Wind on purpose, but for all those years in his hunting career, he had fought with Thorn Black Winds before, and he had an understanding of its recovering abilities. Having made that wound himself, he knew it would take more than fifty or sixty days for a Thorn Black Wind to completely recover.

Also, after such a long confrontation, Mai felt increasingly doubtful about these two Thorn Black Winds' motivation. It felt like they were not prepared to battle against the warriors to the death. Some people were hurt, while there were many new wounds on those animals' bodies. Luckily, these two were not as crazy as the last one they encountered. However, where was the last Thorn Black Wind, the one that got lacerated on the tail? Did it get driven away by these two beasts now?

"It seems like they only want to stop us from going up." Said Qiao.

"They can actually howl..." Another mid-level totemic warrior said curiously. He was the same age as Mai, and quite as experienced as Mai. In the past, he had encountered Thorn Black Winds a few times, and heard stories about Thorn Black Winds from the elders, so as for the habits of this ferocious beast, he knew better than Mai and the others.

"The Thorn Black Wind not only very territorial, being the killer lurking in the dark, it rarely howled. The typical sound it makes is the sound of shaking its

thorns, instead of howling.” The warrior added in a hurry.

A little while before, Lang Ga and the others just heard the howling of Thorn Black Winds, and they decided to come down and help.

Connecting so many odd dots, people couldn't help but wonder, what on earth were these two Thorn Black Winds planning to do?

In the twilight, the quick-moving figures were blurry, and the sound of shaking thorns could be identified from the forest constantly.

When a Thorn Black Wind became exited, the thorns on its body would begin to shake, and create a dense shaking sound. It was not loud, but because of the density, it was not hard to be heard.

At night, the sound was like Yama's call, which scared all the other animals away.

Hearing that sound, people's hearts grew heavy, and their backs were soaked in cold sweat.

“No more stalling, we have to drive these two beasts away!” Mai said firmly. Now it was not completely dark, and the surroundings could still be seen. When it grew completely dark, the situation would become much more worse for them.

If they ran up to the mountainside directly without driving those Thorn Black Winds away, these two beasts would be coming along after them. However, Mai and the other warriors could never let them get to the cave where there were two kids inside, resting. Although Thorn Black Winds were no fans of the environment up in the mountain, it didn't mean that they wouldn't come up.

“Go on!”

They did not have any interest in the giant-antlered deer that they killed, and after a short break, Mai commanded to fight with these two beasts with joint efforts of every warrior.

...

Shao Xuan had that dream again.

It's been a long time, however, he fell into that kind of dream again.

Now, there were no night swallows or snowflakes in his dream. It was completely dark, but obviously he felt a pungent feeling of icy coldness, as if something was lurking in the darkness. In the meantime, there were some dense clacking sounds, as if something was shaking.

Shao Xuan suddenly sat up and opened his eyes. He touched his forehead with his hand, only to find a handful of cold sweat.

Feeling that there was still lingering feeling of icy coldness on his back, Shao Xuan shook a few times and got closer to the fire.

Judging from the situation of the bonfire and the firewood inside, it must have been quite a while since Lang Ga and the others left. So it should be nearly dusk outside.

Why hadn't they returned?

What had they encountered?

Was anybody hurt?

Shao Xuan took a deep breath as he recalled his dream, and he tried hard to ease his nerves. The icy feeling was much stronger than when he dreamt about the night swallows last year. His heart was still pounding like hell after he woke up. He was not sure if that was because of the fear or any other reasons.

Looking aside, Shao Xuan found Mao leaning against the cave wall, sleeping soundly. In fact, Shao Xuan had made quite some noise when he woke up. Normally totemic warriors during hunting missions were quite alert, and they would be wide awake at the slightest sound. Mao apparently was very soundly asleep, for he did not wake up at all. It should be because of the meat they ate. It was for the best, since he was not walking around like an ant on a hot pan.

After feeling a little more warmer and relaxing his nerves, Shao Xuan walked towards the entrance of the cave after adding more firewood to the bonfire.

With previous experiences, he knew that the dream did not come for no reason, he just didn't know what exactly was on the outside.

The giant stone blocked the entrance of the cave completely, and Shao Xuan



would not be able to move it with his own strength. Also, Shao Xuan had no intention of doing so, for there were apparently numerous dangers outside. It was safer to have a giant stone blocking them.

The entrance of the cave was about fifty meters away from where Shao Xuan was sleeping at. As he approached the entrance step by step, Shao Xuan's heart began to pound madly again.

The nearer he got to the entrance, the more intense the danger he felt. All of Shao Xuan's hair stood up straight, and he felt like he was in a giant iceberg.

Shao Xuan slowed down his paces, and even his breath grew lighter, for he tried every possible way to hide himself from being sensed.

When he was about ten meters away from the entrance of the cave, Shao Xuan heard small dense clacking sounds. It seemed like an illusion, but also if it was just passing by his ear.

With the newly-added firewood, the fire grew bigger. As the flame danced, Shao Xuan's shadow danced accordingly, and sometimes there were crackles of burning firewood.

However, Shao Xuan felt no warmth. Instead, he felt constant coldness.

With his mouth wide open, Shao Xuan took a deep silent breath to calm himself down. With taut nerves, Shao Xuan began to go back, quickly, yet with no sound.

When he arrived at Mao's side, he pushed Mao hard.

Although Mao was soundly asleep, he was still vigilant with his subconscious. With only one push, Mao promptly opened his eyes and posed a posture for self-defense. However, when he came back to his senses and realized it was only Shao Xuan, he did not look good immediately. Before he tried to say anything, Shao Xuan quickly covered up his mouth, and glanced at the entrance of the cave at the same time.

Mao was not the kind of person who did not understand the situation, or else he wouldn't be allowed to join the hunting mission. Seeing Shao Xuan's behaviors, he knew there must be something abnormal by the entrance.

Opening his mouth, Mao asked silently, "What happened?"

Shao Xuan had no time to explain. He looked up at the top, for he remembered there were hidden vents up at the cave. He jumped high, and with the help of the wall, Shao Xuan went up to the top and began to search.

The wall was not smooth, and those dents and bumps helped him climb.

There were three vents in all, among which two of them were too small. The only big one was blocked by a stone.

Shao Xuan tried hard to move that stone, and indicated Mao to take it over in silence.

Mao was somehow anxious, for he did not know what was outside the cave, Mai and the others hadn't returned, yet Shao Xuan did not explain at all what was happening. Normally, he would have shouted out already, however, now...

After picking up that stone, Mao laid that down on the ground carefully to avoid making any sound. Almost at the same time he dropped that stone, he heard an abnormal sound created by the giant stone blocking the entrance. It sounded like something sharp was scratching on the stone.

Mao's face froze. That scratching was clearly not made by a human...

The giant stone was moving.

Night wind blew in from that newly-made gap.

The flames of the bonfire danced bolder, and Mao saw his own long shadow dancing distortedly on the wall.

For all his life, Mao had never encountered such circumstances. No matter how many hunting stories he had heard before, or how many hunting stories he had told the others, he only knew what danger tasted like when he truly faced with one.

Aside from these two newly-awakened kids, there was nobody else around. No one could help them, while the approaching beast could probably easily tear them apart.

When his grandfather, the Chief, told him hunting stories, he asked Mao once, "Mao, have you ever tasted the feeling of despair?"

Mao had no memories of what he answered back then. All he remembered was that he did not take it seriously, for he did not quite understand it.

But now, he had a taste of that feeling already.

# Chapter 46 – Pale faces

---

Translated by Sunyancai

The giant stone blocking the entrance of the cave moved a little more, and the shaking sound become more intense and clear.

Based on that sound, Mao had already figured out what creature was moving that stone outside.

Because of that, Mao's face immediately turned pale. All his blood seemed to have frozen over, as he stood still at his spot, with his eyes fixed on the entrance of the cave.

After examining the vents above, Shao Xuan jumped down and tapped on Mao's shoulder, which almost made Mao jump up out of fear.

With trembling lips, Mao did not know what to say. After all, he and Shao Xuan were merely two newly-awakened kids, who could never be a proper opponent to that giant creature outside based on their own strength. It was such a big gap between their strength, no matter how brave they were, they could not deny the truth.

Shao Xuan took his knife, and indicated to Mao to escape from above. He had inspected roughly, and no dangerous animals were to be seen by the vent for now. Even if there were some dangerous animals around, there was no other option for them. Going out was far better than waiting inside and be eaten alive.

As the gap by the entrance grew bigger, the wind blew inside, and the flames began to dance more violently.

There was no time for panic, or thinking. Mao tried with great effort to calm himself down, then he followed Shao Xuan to climb up with a bone knife. Even though the experienced hunting warriors warned that night in the forest was filled with danger, they still had to go out.

Anyway, they had a chance of survival if they managed to escape through the vent. Staying inside, they would just die in a very stupid way. Perhaps, before they could even stimulate and gather their strength, they would already be slapped down by that Thorn Black Wind.

The vent barely allowed Shao Xuan and Mao to worm their way out. If they were older with stronger bodies, they would be stuck in.

When Shao Xuan and Mao were worming their way out, half of the entrance was opened.

The sound of shaking thorns was echoing through the cave, for that Thorn Black Wind was too excited. The whole cave was filled by that sound.

Animals in the forests feared the fire, but not all of them. Also, the bonfire in the cave was not big. For a Thorn Black Wind whose body length was over ten meters, such a small flame was no threat at all.

It seemed that it did not expect to find an empty cave. The Thorn Black Wind was curious. It stepped forward slowly. It poked out its long forked tongue to sense the smell inside, and scanned the whole cave with its radar-like sight. It felt that the bonfire seemed annoying, so with sudden speed, it approached the bonfire like a gust of black wind, and stepped on that flame.

Bang!

Thick horny scales protected its skin from being burned, and with only one step, it put out that flame. The cave then fell into complete darkness.

There was nobody inside, while a heavy smell of bloody meat of the four-fanged wild boar filled the air. However, it could still recognize many people's smells, among which some of the people he was rather familiar with.

Thinking about its last encounter with those people, the thorns on its body began to shake again.

Sha-Sha-sha!

The sound of shaking thorns was even more rapid than before.

Outside the vent, Shao Xuan and Mao stood there with their backs against the cliff. Now, all they wanted was for the Thorn Black Wind to leave after it confirmed there was nobody inside. When Mai and the others returned, they could go inside the cave again.

Shao Xuan held his breath, as he focused on listening to the sounds in the cave. Aside from the sha-sha sound that occasionally entered his ears, he had no way to find what was happening inside. The sound of it stepping on the bonfire was also heard by Shao Xuan. He flexed his muscles, just in case.

After some time, there was no other sound from the cave. They did not know whether the Thorn Black Wind had left. The sky grew darker. Even if there were still traces of light, it was not bright enough for them to see the situation of the entrance of the cave. Plus, because of their perspective, they couldn't see the entrance.

Shao Xuan suddenly felt a chill on his scalp as he was thinking. A sense of coldness quickly spread all along his spine, which made him quiver out of trepidation.

He quickly stepped away a few steps from the vent, he did not forget to drag Mao away as he moved, and warned him not to stay so close to the vent.

Mao moved his sight from the vent, and stepped back a little. He looked at Shao Xuan and raised up his arms to ask Shao Xuan through body language. Suddenly, he felt a gust of wind by his ear, and an icy killing breath was mixed in that wind. Mao felt that the pores on the back of his neck were about to explode.

Ding!

The beast's claw nailed on the cliff, and flying stone shards fell all over Mao's body. His arms got scratched by some sharp edged stone shards. But Mao did not care about that little injury, nor did he had the time to care about it.

At that time, he felt like he got heavily hammered in his heart.

He did not see when the beast's claw raised out from the vent!!

Nor had he heard any sound!!

It all happened so fast, and so quiet. If Shao Xuan hadn't dragged him aside a moment ago; if the vent was bigger to let the whole claw raise out; Mao would have been nailed onto the cliff by that giant black scaled claw, and would've gotten smashed to death.

The silent claw reached out of the vent and wrenched on the cliff, and grabbed a giant stone piece as it pulled back. As it closed its claw, that stone immediately got smashed to pieces.

It did not catch any person, but still, it smashed down a large piece of stone by the vent, when the Thorn Black Wind retrieved its claw. Originally the vent was only big enough for a small kid, now it suddenly became two times bigger!

It not only did not want to stop, the beast intended to keep expanding the vent with its claw.

Apparently, that Thorn Black Wind already knew that Shao Xuan and Mao were outside the cave, and it had its attention focused on them already.

"Go!!"

Shao Xuan and Mao moved away quickly.

Actually, it was not very hard for them to run on that steep cliff. It was not completely dark yet, and all they had to do was to focus and not make mistakes. One mistake could cause them to fall along the cliff. Even though, with their body strength and quick reaction, they would not be dead after the fall. However, there would be a high chance that they might get captured by the Thorn Black Wind that was coming after them.

"Where should we go?" asked Mao. Because of what happened earlier, he had much more faith in Shao Xuan. After all, when he had not realized what was happening, Shao Xuan already sensed the danger.

"Let's go up." said Shao Xuan.

That was also the thing Shao Xuan was thinking about earlier.

Mai and the others should be at the mountain foot area. To go to Mai for help

was of course a good idea, but if they ran down the mountain, it would be highly questionable whether they could outrun the Thorn Black Wind that's chasing after them. That beast had a really sensitive smelling ability, and Shao Xuan had no confidence in getting rid of it easily. Also, since Mai and the others did not make it to the cave yet, who knows what situation that they were in? With no clear image of the situation down the mountain, obviously it was not a good idea to run down the mountain.

The other reason was based on Shao Xuan's suspicion.

As they were running up, Shao Xuan asked, "Does the Thorn Black Wind dislike the cold?"

Hearing Shao Xuan's question, Mao thought of something, "I heard that Thorn Black Winds like warm and moist places, and they rarely go up the mountain."

As he was saying, Mao himself knew what Shao Xuan was thinking.

If they went up, the temperature would fall sharply. For mountains in this area, the range of temperature was really large. The upper part of the mountain was covered in snow, and on the mountaintop there was even perennial ice and snow. Not many dangerous animals lived up in the mountain, and the real danger was the environment and the temperature.

If they went down the mountain, as far as he knew, Thorn Black Winds could be very persistent with its prey. Also they had a very sensitive smelling ability, so once they confirmed their target, they would not give it up easily. Down the mountain was the territory of Thorn Black Winds. Night was the time for Thorn Black Winds, and since it was night already, going down meant sending themselves into the Thorn Black Wind's belly.

Either be frozen to death, or be eaten alive. If Mao had to choose, he would rather go up the mountain for a better chance of survival. If at that time the Thorn Black Wind could not endure the cold environment and retreated, that would be great

There were sounds of stones breaking, so it seemed that the vent grew bigger and bigger. Mixed with the sounds of breaking, there were also dense clacking sounds. That Thorn Black Wind became more and more excited.



In fact, the Thorn Black Wind could totally exit through the cave entrance, and then chase after them. However, it chose not to do so. Perhaps it hadn't thought about that way, perhaps tearing down a small vent was not a problem for it, but it disliked to take a detour. Or it had its own other reasons.

At the same time that Shao Xuan and Mao ran up to the mountaintop for their lives, Mai and the others had successfully attacked the two Thorn Black Winds down the mountain. The beasts were now hesitant in blocking their way.

Mai felt delighted for a moment, but after a second, his face became rather stiff.

The sound from the mountainside was not loud, but with the quiet surroundings and Mai's outstanding hearing abilities, of course he heard the sound of stones breaking.

Mai heard it, there were a few other warriors that heard it too, and all their faces turned green.

"Is it coming from the cave?!" Qiao shouted surprisingly.

"Oh, no! Ah-Xuan is still in the cave!" Lang Ga's knife in his hand was shaking heavily, which almost made him drop it.

"Go up the mountain!!" Mai shouted out.

This time, those two hesitating Thorn Black Winds did not stop them from going up.

Regardless of what, Mai led the others, rushing towards the cave immediately.

The sound of stones being broken did not last long, and the surroundings became quiet again, which made Mai and the others even more worried. With sounds of stones breaking, they could still hope that the two kids were fine. But with the silence, there were only two results... Either the crisis was over, or...

Mai dared not think more, and he spared no efforts to rush to the cave.

When they finally reached the entrance, many people's faces turned totally pale at the sight.

With Shao Xuan and Mao's strength, it would not be easy for them to move

that giant stone. Even if they wanted to move it, they would not move it that far. With a small opening, their skinny bodies could easily come and go. Of course the stone was not moved by the two kids, let alone that there were also huge claw marks on it.

Seeing the shifted giant stone and fresh claw marks, Lang Ga's legs became so weak that he could hardly stand.

Mai rushed into the cave without grabbing a torch to light it up. However, now there was merely chaos left inside.

The chilly wind coming from the entrance and the vent, blew away all the warmth in their hearts.

# Chapter 47 – Nasty environment

---

Translated by Sunyancai

“What the fuck!!”

“This is the one from last time! It is! It must be the one! The two Thorn Black Winds down the mountain must have been called by it as well!”

Taking what happened down the mountain into consideration, now people had figured out some of the clues. However, they never expected that the beast they encountered last time would be so persistent!

In the past, they only knew that Thorn Black Winds had a stubborn character and were very territorial. To their surprise, it could also call for others' help to take revenge. People always say that you may get stuck with an unwanted guest if you invite random ones into your home. Those two helpers down the mountain probably would just take the place by the pool.

To everyone's surprise, the Thorn Black Wind from last time would rather lose its territory to get its vengeance!

“I knew it... I knew that it would not easily let go.” Qiao stared at the chaos and murmured depressedly.

During the last hunting mission, Ah-Fei was tagging along Mai's hunting group together with another kid. They were brought to the mission by the other mid-level warriors. In accordance with the rules in the past, if the new guys were brought in by mid-level warriors, Mai would not reject their participation. The other teams did the same as well.

Later when they were hunting in that basin, Ah-Fei set his eyes on a baby

Thorn Black Wind which came out during the daylight, alone. Perhaps its parent was sleeping by the pool, while the little one did not sleep. Out of curiosity, it came out during daylight, and chased a fox to somewhere far from that pool. Ah-Fei and the others found it there.

Compared with adult Thorn Black Winds, newly-born babies were of course easy to be dealt with.

In the tribe, newly-awakened warriors would wear the quarry they hunted during the last year in the next ritual ceremony on Snow Festival, to compete with each other. Even though the Shaman and the Chief did not include that into the ritual ceremony, it had gradually become a publicly recognized standard practice.

That was the problem.

Ah-Fei insisted on hunting down that baby Thorn Black Wind. With the help of a few other warriors, he succeeded in killing it, but just when they were skinning the little one, the big one came.

That's when the trouble began.

The ferocious beast found its baby dead at the scene, no wonder it went crazy and chased after the killers as if it was the end of the world. Those few mid-level warriors guarding the kids could not fight against those endless attacks from a crazy adult Thorn Black Wind, so they shouted out for help. After quite a few warriors were injured, they finally managed to get rid of the big one. Also, Ah-Fei did not have the chance to take that baby Thorn Black Wind's body, for the big one would still haunt them if they had took with them that little one's body.

The two badly-injured warriors from last hunting mission were hurt during that incident. If Mai hadn't arrived on time, they probably would have lost their lives.

The reason that they did not bring those kids from the last hunting mission except for Mao this time, was because they were worried similar incidents might happen. Shao Xuan was an exception, for Mai valued his ability and he wanted him to get used to the environment sooner. Also, Mai figured that Shao Xuan was sensible and obedient. So he brought him along in his hunting group.

Hence why there were only two kids in the whole hunting team this time, and those two kids were both in the protection of his hunting group... If anything happened to them...

One was the kid that awakened early and had the Shaman's favor; while the other was quite talented, being the son of the hunting team leader, and grandson of the Chief. It would be a great strike for the tribe if any of them died out there. If both of them died in the accident, they would not have the courage to go back to the tribe, for they would not be able to face the Shaman and the Chief.

"It racked its brain, just to get back at us by killing the kids in our group!" A warrior punched at the cliff angrily.

Last time, they killed its kid, and this time, it came after the human kids. It didn't care about coming out of hiding during daylight, climb up the mountain and risk losing its territory doing so.

Indeed, you should never underestimate Ferocious Beasts.

"We should not have taken this road." Mai was filled with regret in his heart, for somehow he had underestimated the Thorn Black Wind. There would've been new unknown dangers if they took a new route, but if he had anticipated such an incident, he would rather take those risks!

However, now there's no time for regret. After examining all those marks and traces, people began to go up the mountain searching for the kids as separate smaller groups. It was dark at night, so searching was not easy, and they had to be aware of other threats at the same time.

.....

Shao Xuan and Mao almost used all their energy to escape.

For Mao, even when he used his totemic power and got a much better sight, he could not see the path clearly at night. The two crescent moons were totally blocked by a thick layer of clouds, and the surroundings were completely dark.

Shao Xuan went in the front and he asked Mao to follow his steps. At least they could avoid some pits and roots that way.

Stepping on someone's footprints was a game played by kids in the tribe since their childhood. Children living up in the mountain liked to play it more, for their parents used that game as a pre-training for their kids. So moving forward on other's footprints was not hard for them.

Now Mao was running after Shao Xuan, and most of the times he could step on Shao Xuan's footprints precisely. When Shao Xuan jumped, he jumped, at the same angle and distance. When Shao Xuan took a left turn, he took the same left turn. He could estimate the terrain based on Shao Xuan's footprints. It was a game he played since childhood, so of course he was quite familiar and skilled in that.

If observed in daylight, one would find that there were only a single person's footprints and there were no trace of two people running.

Mao was filled with curiosity in his heart, for he did not understand why Shao Xuan had such a strong sense towards danger, and why Shao Xuan was able to tell where the pits were in such a dark environment. The mountain was rugged with a lot of pits; he could hear the noise made by that Thorn Black Wind when it fell into some hole. The sound appeared constantly, and now it became even more frequent than before. Mao even guessed perhaps Shao Xuan was running on terrible paths on purpose, just to trip the big guy up. However, he had not made a single mistake by following in Shao Xuan's steps so far!

But, now it was not a good time to ponder.

When Shao Xuan was running up the mountain, there was not complete darkness in his sight. Instead, he could see a picture formed by the color of gray in different shades. He could see all the dents and convex rocks in his sight clearly, even when they were covered in snow.

At this time, Shao Xuan was truly glad that he had such an ability, or else they would've been caught up by the Thorn Black Wind in no time if they fell down constantly.

The snow layer beneath their feet was thicker and it almost reached their knees. It was colder as well and there were snowflakes in the air.

Shao Xuan felt that his face turned numb, and it became more and more difficult for them to run. If it weren't for their totemic power, they would've already had frozen limbs. However, the situation had to change, because it would be too late if they did not think about a solution before they got exhausted. One could not stay in that cold environment for too long.

Luckily, the Thorn Black Wind also slowed down on the chasing. Apparently, it was not used to ice and snow. The stalking silently that it was so famous for didn't work anymore. If you paid attention, you could constantly hear the sound that it made when it stepped on the snow.

The distance between them grew and Shao Xuan gave up on running towards the mountaintop. Instead, he began to run around it. He had no other option. Running up might scare that Thorn Black Wind away, but there was a high chance that they might freeze to death.

Every time when they went up, they could clearly feel that the temperature dropped some more. Since the Thorn Black Wind obviously slowed down its speed and was frustrated with its movement, Shao Xuan certainly would not risk going higher even more.

Privately in his mind, Shao Xuan was a little relieved, for he assumed after running for a while, they could probably get rid of the monster behind.

However, Shao Xuan noticed there was something wrong after just a short breath. The big one suddenly speeded up and rushed towards them. The original distance decreased very quickly.

The Thorn Black Wind found the environment too nasty to adapt to, which made it want to retreat. It was not only cold here, the snow wouldn't stop, and that made it sleepy. There was no grass, no tree, but there were lots of pits and holes! Sometimes when it stepped in a hole by mistake, it would fall into a pond of snow! All snow in the pond! It wanted to just run down the mountain because of that.

All the expanding thorns were now tightly attached to its body, to better isolate the coldness around. Its movement became far slower than before. It moved at half the speed and it dared not to pull out its tongue!

It did not expect the human kids were so cunning that they would run up the

mountain. It was its first trip upwards, and it found the environment very nasty and annoying. No wonder others of its kind didn't go up!

However, it felt reluctant to give up now. In here it was quite difficult for it to sense the smell. If he let those two kids go, it would probably lose them!

No!!

Can't let them go!!

He didn't know how to deal with those big ones, but it was determined to kill those two small ones, and then toss their bodies in front of those big ones!

Thinking about that, it increased its fury. Influenced by the excitement, the closed up thorns on its body were raising to start shaking again.



# Chapter 48 – Either you die, or I die

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan could feel their stalker getting closer and closer, probably it understood that its stalking ability didn't work in this environment, and severely restricted him. So it pulled all stops loose and decided to go for the kill. After all, it was no good to stall like that.

The Thorn Black Wind used all its strength to chase after them, with its eyes fixed on their backs, catching up. Its every step pierced through the thick snow, nailing down on the frozen ground, and creating loud bangs.

Hearing the approaching footsteps, Mao felt a chill in his heart, and almost tripped on a loose stone.

Even though Shao Xuan and Mao both speeded up, and the annoying environment slowed it down a lot, but after all, it was a "Black Wind" with the title "killer of the mountains". At his full speed, it was impossible for Shao Xuan and Mao to outrun him.

Shao Xuan felt an icy chill run down his spine. His hair stood up on end because of the cold wind and the chilly feeling, and it was as if his whole body was soaked in icy water.

"Split up!" Shao Xuan shouted.

Shao Xuan and Mao split up to evade the huge figure.

Without Shao Xuan's lead, Mao would never be able to survive under such circumstances. Faced with the night and the snow, he could barely see the giant figure. He had no confidence in whether he could still live if that Thorn Black

Wind slashed its paws towards him.

However, it seemed that the Thorn Black Wind also sensed that Shao Xuan was the most annoying one of the two, so after it failed to catch them both, it turned its head towards Shao Xuan. Kicking off with its hind legs, which created a gust of wind and snow blowing towards Mao, the Thorn Black Wind shot towards Shao Xuan.

It knew that as long as Shao Xuan was eliminated, the other little guy would be easy.

Shao Xuan leaped over a layer of snow, and quickly he pulled out a short spear from his back. And just before he was about to land, he twisted his body, he tossed out the short spear using the centrifugal strength of the turn, aiming at the Thorn Black Wind's eye.

The short spear flew towards the Thorn Black Wind's eye like a bullet. Even though it failed to dodge the spear, but the beast managed to react quickly, it shifted its head to the side a bit and closed his eyes, having his hard-scaled eyelids cover them.

The short spear did not pierce into its eye, but only stuck the corner of its eye. With the hard scales shielding the eye, the spear did not go in deep, but the sharp stone spearhead still slightly pierced through the corner of its eye. Its eye was hurt and there was blood flowing out.

With its eye injured, the Thorn Black Wind was furious as well as shocked. It did not expect this little thing could actually hurt it so quickly!

Shao Xuan could not see the blood by its eyes, for now all he saw was a giant skeleton. Earlier he tossed aiming at the eyeholes in the Thorn Black Wind's skull, but apparently, it failed to pierce through.

Although he could not see the eyes of that Thorn Black Wind, Shao Xuan could still feel the increasingly ferocious glare from its eyes.

In order to share the pressure on Shao Xuan's end, Mao estimated the position of Thorn Black Wind based on the sound and tossed a spear towards its direction. It was a shame that the thick scales and the thorns on its back together formed a terrible protective armor, which could not be easily broken

by a stone spear.

It only had a few relatively vulnerable spots on its head and on part of its tail. The spot that Mai hit before was on its tail, where there was no thick layer of thorns. So only a single layer of scales could definitely not withstand the full force of a totemic warrior.

The Thorn Black Wind ignored Mao completely and focused on Shao Xuan. Its tail waved and slammed on the ground out of anger, which created loud banging noises. It sounded like it was striking on a cement floor, and the only difference was that snowflakes and smashed stones were flying all over the place.

After avoiding a claw, Shao Xuan pulled out his tooth sabre to shield himself from the sharp claw swinging from his side.

Screech...

The sound of the sharp claw hitting and scratching the tooth sabre.

The sharp claw which could easily smash the stones in that cave now only left some shallow traces on the tooth sabre.

The sabre was not much damaged, but Shao Xuan felt throbbing pain on his whole arm, as if it was broken into pieces.

There was no time for Shao Xuan to examine his wounded arm. With exploding strength from his calf muscles, he left his spot to avoid close range combat with the Thorn Black Wind. But the Thorn Black Wind was not called the killer of the forest for nothing. It swung its tail towards Shao Xuan at the same time he wanted to dodge, as if it already anticipated Shao Xuan's reaction.

Having just landed, Shao Xuan was not able to evade in time, and all he could do was grasp his tooth sabre and put it in front of his chest, to avoid being stabbed by the thorns on the Thorn Black Wind's tail.

Bang!

Shao Xuan was blown away by that violent strength, and he couldn't help but step back some distance after he landed. The blood in his chest churned

because of that strike. If the Thorn Black Wind wasn't weakened by the environment, and if it didn't suffer from being severely limited in his movement, Shao Xuan would have been smashed into oblivion already.

Since he came into this world, it was Shao Xuan's first time being in such a dangerous situation.

He was already mentally prepared for hunting being dangerous, however, he did not expect to meet such a persistent and ferocious beast in his first hunting mission.

Whether in physical strength or speed, Shao Xuan and Mao together could not overpower the weakened Thorn Black Wind.

It was a matter of survival, either you die or I die.

The only short spear he still had, had been tossed. Originally, Shao Xuan brought three short spears with him, but two of them were used during their escape. Now, Shao Xuan had only the tooth sabre that old Ke gave him, and three spearheads he had in his animal skin bag.

Mao never stopped creating trouble for the Thorn Black Wind, but with his limited power, he was not taken seriously by that Thorn Black Wind. When he left the cave together with Shao Xuan, he brought seven short spears, among which five of them had been already tossed, and the sixth almost hit the Thorn Black Wind's eye!

At that time, finally, the Thorn Black Wind looked at Mao's direction.

Now!

This might be the only chance they get!

At that time, Shao Xuan poured out ferocious killing intent from his eyes. Forcing out all his totemic power, raising his power to the peak, Shao Xuan pushed off with his feet explosively.

However, he did not rush out in a straight path, instead, he used the spear that was stuck on the ground to alter his path.

When The Thorn Black Wind heard the sound and turned its head at Shao Xuan's direction, it slashed out its claw towards him. However, it did not expect

Shao Xuan to the change directions of his attack in the middle. Before it could come back to its senses, Shao Xuan had already evaded its sharp claw.

Perhaps Shao Xuan wasn't as strong as the mid-level totemic warrior Mai, but with the help of that tooth sabre, and using all his strength, he managed to pierce through the most vulnerable spot on the Thorn Black Wind's head!

The tooth sabre pierced through its head and went straight into its skull.

Even though he chose the most vulnerable spot, even though Shao Xuan used all his strength, that tooth sabre did not completely pierce into its skull, and two thirds of the sabre could still be seen. If it was Mai who stabbed, of course the sabre would be fully buried inside, and perhaps that Thorn Black Wind would've died in the blink of an eye. However, it was Shao Xuan, who had only been awakened for about a month's time.

Even so, that strike managed to give the Thorn Black Wind an injury it couldn't ignore.

Shao Xuan wanted to push it in further, and and give it more damage, but the Thorn Black Wind was already swiping its claw. Shao Xuan could not even pull out the sabre, for the sabre was tightly embedded in its skull. There was no time for another move, but he had to dodge as soon as possible.

And even though Shao Xuan got scratched on his back, luckily he got away in time, and the wound was not deep nor lethal. If he had hesitated for even a moment, he would've been doomed.

A loud roar pierced the region, and all the snowflakes around trembled because of that roar.

The Thorn Black Wind began to roar because of the severe injury in his head. It intended to pull out the sabre with its claw, but unfortunately the sabre was stabbing at a very delicate spot, and even the slightest touch would cause it unbearable pain. Its claws were useless and it was impossible for it to pull out the sabre quickly. Instead, every movement caused it to endure bursts of extreme pain which almost made it faint.

# Chapter 49 – Avalanche

---

Translated by Sunyancai

There were three spare spearheads in his hide bag. In fact, there was a larger hide bag which contained more of these tools back in the cave. It was just, Shao Xuan didn't have the time to grab that one when he was escaping.

Shao Xuan reached in his hide bag.

Every stone spearhead was crafted and polished by himself, and they felt quite familiar when he held them in his hand. It felt like he already would know its trajectory and effect before he throws it!

Old Ke had mentioned to Shao Xuan that each and every piece of stoneware had its own unique story, an excellent stoneware crafter could clearly sense that unique story, that is the power of its creator.

Back then, Shao Xuan did not understand what that felt like, however, now, he began to understand.

They were merely stone spearheads without their handles.

But it didn't matter anymore, for he had a use for them anyway!!

When the Thorn Black Wind tried to pull out the sabre in its skull, Shao Xuan used the spearheads as darts and tossed two simultaneously towards one of the Thorn Black Wind's eyes!

One spearhead deviated a little from its target, while the other one stabbed straight into its eye!

Roar!

An even louder and angrier scream echoed through the snowy region. The whole space was nearly torn apart by that sound.

Shao Xuan was thinking whether he should throw the last spearhead into its other eye, but at that very second he heard a loud cracking sound coming from above his head in the distance, as if something just broke.

Hearing that sound, Shao Xuan's heart skipped a beat, and the following rumbling noises confirmed his guess.

Shao Xuan felt his mind nearly explode, and he had neither anymore time nor any energy to deal with the Thorn Black Wind.

"Follow me!"

Shao Xuan looked around the surroundings, and told Mao to run after him.

The place they were running towards was a little higher than where they were before, and while running there, they could clearly feel the increasing depth of the layer of snow and stronger winds blowing against their faces.

What the hell is happening?

Mao was curious, and quite a few times he wanted to ask directly. The Thorn Black Wind was quite some distance away from them, and judging by its voice, it must have been experiencing unbearable pain from a severe wound. However, apparently, Shao Xuan was eager to run away for his life.

With the rumbling noise getting louder and louder, the anxiety in Mao's heart grew bigger and bigger.

Shao Xuan felt the blood in his veins on the verge of boiling. Earlier they were fighting desperately with that Thorn Black Wind, and a minute later they were facing an avalanche. His nerves had been tense for quite a while without a moment of relaxation, and the totemic power he circulated was on the verge of overloading. His body felt exhausted. In fact, the thing that should be doing urgently was to find a good place to get some rest and calm down the unstable, almost-uncontrollable power inside his body. However, the situation did not allow them any time for resting.

Because of the earth-shattering roar of the Thorn Black Wind, which almost

made Shao Xuan throw up some blood, somewhere on the top of the mountain, the snow layer got shattered as well. The cracking noise Shao Xuan heard was the sound of the snow and ice layer shattering. With the snow layer broken, large quantities of snow began to roll and slide down. It grew more and more heavy as it gathered more and more snow, and swept down the mountain like a flood.

The Thorn Black Wind seemed to have felt something as well, so it gave up on trying to pull out the blade in its head, and began to act anxiously. It sensed that some unknown danger was approaching quickly and the tremors had spread all over its body through the trembling ground. Even a domineering species like itself wanted to turn and run away immediately.

Regardless of the wounds he had on its head and eyes, it could still track the direction at which those two little buggers escaped to. Should it go down the mountain, or continue to chase after them?

Immediately, the Thorn Black Wind made a decision and it directly ran in Shao Xuan's direction. Its intuition told it that those two little bastards might have a way of avoiding the danger. Besides, it went through a lot of trouble getting up here, and even got stabbed by that little bugger. It felt reluctant to give up now, for it still held the thoughts of biting them both to death.

Shao Xuan at that moment did not have the time nor the thought to pay attention to whether they were still being chased by that Thorn Black Wind. All he wanted to do was to hide behind that giant stone ahead, which was the only suitable shelter in the area.

Heavy and enormous snow bulks ran down the mountain with terrifying rumbling noises, which trembled the ground.

Mao felt more and more exhausted while he was running behind Shao Xuan. However, the looming crisis forced him to hang in there. Shao Xuan had fought directly with the Thorn Black Wind, which must have cost him much more energy. Since he had no intention of slowing down, Mao felt that he should not be having any useless thoughts. So he gritted his teeth and kept following.

The approaching rumbling noise made Mao feel as if the whole mountain was



about to collapse. He did not know what that was, but the pressure made it difficult for him to breathe.

It was getting closer!

And closer!

Shao Xuan rushed behind that giant stone, which was connected with the mountain, for he found it the most stable place in this area.

“Grab the stone and close your mouth! Hold your breath in a bit!” Shao Xuan said to Mao.

The huge snow bulk was fast approaching, so was the Thorn Black Wind that chased after them.

Seeing that cursed Thorn Black Wind, Shao Xuan really wanted to curse it to hell. However, they could not leave this place, because there was nowhere else to hide in.

At that time, Shao Xuan prayed in his heart, hoping for the avalanche to come sooner, and flush that trouble away.

That Thorn Black Wind sped up and now it was only about ten meters away from Shao Xuan and Mao.

There were spindrifts of snow flying around, while the giant mouth with numerous sharp teeth was rushing towards them.

It was just that the giant mouth was a little bit late.

Shao Xuan took a deep breath and held the stone tight. When the rumbling noise arrived, he closed his eyes.

When the avalanche arrived, Shao Xuan heard an unwilling roar of the Thorn Black Wind and he could even smell its stinky breath.

The Thorn Black Wind could merely roar before it was drowned in that avalanche rushing by. Later, there were only terrible sounds, which made people think that it was the end of the world.

Although they were hidden behind a huge stone, Shao Xuan and Mao still got buried in the snow for quite some time. Without knowing how long it had been,

Shao Xuan pushed the snow above him away when the rumbling sound faded and the snow stopped pouring down.

Icy air rushed into his lungs with a tingling cold sensation. However, Shao Xuan finally got the chance to ease his taut nerves.

There was no Thorn Black Wind in his vision. Apparently, it got flushed away somewhere. Alive or dead, at least it was not a threat anymore for Shao Xuan and Mao temporarily.

“For now...are we safe?” Mao was still recovering from the shock. He had never encountered anything like that.

“Yes, for now.”

At Shao Xuan’s words, Mao suddenly got relieved.

“What...what was that...earlier?” After a moment of rest, Mao asked, with some uneased fright in his voice.

“Avalanche.”

“Avalanche?” Mao searched his memory and he was sure he had not heard that term before. However, he remembered a similar story which his grandpa, the Chief, told him a long time ago. It was just that it did not excite him, and he preferred stories with ferocious beasts involved. Now with his own firsthand experience, he knew that when in times like this, nature’s power was far more terrifying than any ferocious beast. For some time, he even felt like the whole mountain was about to fall down on his head.

They had survived, for the second time. However, Shao Xuan and Mao dared not run around, for no one knew whether there would be a second avalanche. If there was another one, they might not find a shelter as suitable as this one.

Out of fear for having other accidents, they dared not fall asleep as well. Perhaps they would never wake up again if they fell asleep.

After resting for a while, Shao Xuan asked Mao about the Thorn Black Wind. Mao had not seen the Thorn Black Wind in person before, but he briefly explained the story that had happened during last hunting mission, which he heard from his father. Now, the trouble started by Ah-Fei had befallen them.

“Fuck!” Shao Xuan cursed in a low voice, “I’m going to beat him up hard when we get back!”

# Chapter 50 – Sunrise

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Notice:

Previously we translated “刀” as sabre, what it is in our context is a single edged sword, since the best there was in English was sabre, so that was what we used.

And a “剑” is translated as a sword, but it is essentially a double edged sword.

Now, we thought that double edged sword might show up too, but as I read ahead, they didn't.

So I'm going to switch sabre over to sword, as sabre is a bit awkward and a single edged sword is after all, also a sword. I will change sabre in previous instances later on too.

It was better to be more cautious.

A bit later, there was another avalanche, but not as massive as the last one.

Shao Xuan did not intend to leave before dawn. So they waited until sunrise, for it was not convenient for them to move or identify the paths when it was still dark.

They were targeted by both a ferocious beast and a severe avalanche. After running away for such a long time, all kinds of emotions began to well up once they relaxed.

Hungry and tired, but they still had to stay alert because it was necessary to avoid unforeseen dangers. Because of that, Shao Xuan had cursed the trouble-maker Ah-Fei over nine thousand times in his heart.

Originally, they had brought a piece of meat with them, but they lost it during their escape. Shao Xuan searched in his animal skin bag and found a spearhead and a small gourd inside. The gourd was filled with boar blood, and there was still some boar blood left. Mai and the others had put in some kind of a grass essence, which could prevent the blood from coagulating.

After drinking some boar blood, Shao Xuan passed his gourd on to Mao. That guy was in even worse condition than him. All his stuff was lost on the way, except for some short spears and a stone sword.

Although there was no meat, a swig of the four-fanged boar's blood could restore their energy to some extent. Mao looked around and asked Shao Xuan, "Do you think Mai and the others will come to find us?"

"I'm not sure." If they were in some other places, for example the basin or the valley, or the forest they marched through, Mai and the other warriors would probably come and find them based on their traces. However, in this place, since they were stepping on ice and snow, a lot of the traces they left had been erased by the snow. Besides, when they were chased after by that Thorn Black Wind, instead of going straight up, Shao Xuan began to escape circularly after they got to a certain altitude.

The temperature at night was far lower than during daylight. When they were climbing up the mountain, it was the middle of the day, and they already felt quite cold, let alone now when it was already mid-night.

Perhaps they had consumed too much energy that night, the absorption of the four-fanged boar blood was quicker than before. Mao took three swigs constantly.

Their totemic power hadn't stopped running. It was the only option, for one would get easily frozen without the support of the totemic power, so they had to keep it running.

Finally, they had some calm, but Mao did not know what to talk with Shao Xuan. After all, he had some problems with Shao Xuan. After drinking quite a bit

of the blood of the four-fanged boar, Mao felt a little sleepy. However, the taut nerves and endless icy wind had driven away his drowsiness a lot. Glancing at the surroundings, there was nothing but the darkness. They could barely see the vicinity, but everything disappeared in the distance. After having bottled it up for a while, Mao finally decided to ask Shao Xuan why he could see the surroundings in the dark. However, just when he turned to Shao Xuan, he found him gulping down the boar blood again from his gourd.

It was the fifth swig...

Normally, Mai only allowed them to take one swig at a time, for they would not be able to endure the energy from that blood if they drank too much. Even when Mao himself was exhausted, he merely constantly took three swigs, which made him feel that it was near his limitation. When you have too much energy at one time, you may find it difficult to control, and when the energy got out of control, you may suffer from the energy rioting inside your body. However, Shao Xuan had no intention of stopping, and judging from his actions, perhaps there would be a sixth swig shortly.

“Are you okay...with so much of that?” Mao asked.

“For now it’s okay.” Shao Xuan felt that the energy brought in by the boar blood would quickly fade away after some time. The feeling of exhaustion hit him again and again, so he needed to take another swig. After a few rounds of that, Shao Xuan did not find any side effect, so he followed his feeling and kept drinking the boar’s blood.

Mao only took three swigs from the half-full gourd, and Shao Xuan drank up the rest. When there were no more boar blood in the gourd, there was a misty light on the horizon.

Mao looked at Shao Xuan as if he was staring at a monster. He could not figure out why that guy could drink so much boar blood and still act normally. Instead of suffering from issues in his body, he seemed more and more vigorous!

No one would believe that if he told the people in the tribe!

“Shall we leave now?” Mao asked.

The snow had stopped falling for quite some time, and with the lighted up horizon, they could obviously feel the rise of the temperature. When the sun rose, they would not have to continue circulating their totemic power.

“Let’s wait for a bit more.” Shao Xuan answered as he gazed at the sky.

The clouds dispersed a little and Shao Xuan could see a peak among the sea of clouds, which was the mountaintop of a mountain in the distance. It constantly revealed its existence within the surge of clouds. Farther away, there were taller mountains poking into the deep blue sky.

When the sun finally came out and shed its lights on the snowy region, the icy tone finally lessened. Endless snow filled one’s horizon and when you looked up, you could see the peak of the mountain.

Snow covered their knees and they could only see the color of white for as far as their sight went. Heaven and earth seemed to be merged together. When you looked down the mountain, the world down there was buried in mist, which could not be seen through clearly.

The vision ahead made one feel as if they were lost in a world of white, which could never be crossed. Some less determined minds might probably flinch at the sight of it.

Here, it was higher than the mountain that Mai had led them to before. Shao Xuan was looking at one of the mountains inside a mountain range. When you looked afar, you could see the white mountain peaks for a thousand miles.

“What...is this place?” Mao looked at the strange scenery and asked anxiously. He remembered the places that he had been to before, and even the scenery nearby. However, he felt completely unfamiliar with the things he was seeing now.

When they were escaping, it felt not far, but judging from the circumstances now, they realized that they were in big trouble.

It was impossible to stay here for long, so Shao Xuan decided to head down the mountain first, at least they would go to somewhere warmer.

In his heart, Shao Xuan was still worrying about old Ke's tooth sword. When old Ke had given him that sword, he had held it in front of old Ke and told him to rest assured, for he promised to take good care of the sword. However, the sword was gone now.

They headed down the mountain, and after they had gone through the mist, scenery from down the mountain began to appear.

In these mountains, there was no vegetation in the snow covered area, while down here there was a lot of green that enjoyed short winters and long summers.

They were almost two different worlds.

After walking for some time, they saw a big chunk of snow and a thin layer of snow that was melting under the sun. The chunk began to reveal its true appearance under the snow...black scales.

The sword sticking out indicated that it was the Thorn Black Wind's head, and Shao Xuan quickly confirmed that.

A ball of snow fell down along with the melted snow-water, with traces of red mixed in. Shao Xuan looked closely and found that the sword pierced through for over half its length instead of the previous one third. Around the sword, there was some frozen blood.

Thorn Black Wind's thorns and scales which usually looked majestic while standing straight, had now all lowered, not moving at all.

Shao Xuan closed his eyes after indicating Mao not to move. When he opened his eyes again, he saw a giant skeleton in his view. Unlike yesterday, the huge ferocious beast had quite a few broken bones now, as if it had hit something hard. Even if it was still alive, it would be severely injured. And the head... the sword got stabbed in deeper into the skull.

If not for the sword, Shao Xuan would be heading down the mountain without any hesitation, and he would never try to examine if that Thorn Black Wind was still alive. It'd better be dead, for even if it was barely alive, with Shao Xuan's condition, he had no confidence in beating it.

Shao Xuan made a hard snowball with the snow he gathered, and then tossed



it towards the sword.

The sword trembled, while the huge ferocious beast did not move.

After a testing a few times, Shao Xuan finally confirmed, that the ferocious beast, that dominated on the top of the food chain in the basin, was actually dead.

# Chapter 51 – Just one touch

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Flaming Horn tribe.

The life inside the tribe was just as calm and peaceful as always.

Early in the morning, old Ke tossed Caesar some meat and bones, then grabbed a stoneware and began polishing it as he sat there. He looked the same old way, without any facial expression or any words. However, people familiar with him could still figure it out that old Ke had been not quite himself lately. For example, you could see it from the wooden box at the corner for waste residue. All the residue after carving off stone flakes or pieces of failed crafted items went directly there.

Old Ke used to have far less wasted there.

Caesar who was gnawing on a bone lackadaisically in the corner seemed to be skinnier than before. It was not because of old Ke not willing to feed him, he got skinnier because of its low spirit and loss of appetite. So he seemed boney now.

Caesar's ear moved a little and looked at the window as he was chewing on the bone slowly. Soon, a person came in through the window from the outside. Before he landed, he pushed off with a finger against the ground and with that strength he flipped in the air as if avoiding something.

"What?" Ge landed steadily and he looked around his surroundings. By the window was the trap he triggered on his last visit. Originally he was prepared for something new popping out from the ground, however, unexpectedly there was nothing at all.

This is not right!

Ge squatted down as he narrowed his eyes and scanned the room, not letting any detail escape his sight.

Caesar stared at Ge with a bone in his mouth, for he didn't understand why this person had to roll over when he came in.

After confirming there was no other trap, Ge finally stood up. In fact, the few traps that he triggered before were still the way he left them, and old Ke did not even bother to clear the scene.

"Hey, how's everything going, old Ke?" Ge came to old Ke's side and handed him a few animal meat chunks and two fine stone cores which he pulled out from a hide bag, "My son is joining the next hunting mission, hence I need your help to craft something for him."

Old Ke did not respond to his words, while he continued on working on the stuff he had at hand.

Ge didn't mind at all, because he knew old Ke had already heard that. He just put the things aside and dragged over a stone stool as if he were in his own house. Ge gazed at the stone sword that old Ke was working on and said, "Ah-Xuan and the others have probably already started hunting at the first location. What do you think he will bring back from his first hunting mission?"

Old Ke hesitated for a moment at Ge's words. But he kept silent as he continued on crafting.

Seeing old Ke like this, Ge finally ascertained what old Ke was worrying about.

Old Ke wed no wife and fathered no children in his life. As a youth it was okay for him to live that way, but later on when he had to quit from the hunting team because of the leg, his temper grew more and more weird. People found him difficult to get along with, and almost no kid would come to be on congenial terms with him. Even those who came to him to learn stone crafting skills, never stuck to it. Finally, Ah-Xuan entered his life, and old Ke almost treated him like his own son.

When kids went on their first hunting trip, their elders and relatives would naturally worry. So most of the parents chose to go out with their children, for

at least they could have the chance to look after their own kids. Personally joining in the battle was better than trusting the kids to others' attendance after all.

If old Ke weren't injured, he probably would've taken Ah-Xuan out during the first hunting mission this year, however...

"Don't worry. Ah-Xuan is a quick-witted boy who got awakened at such a young age. Let alone that he is favored by the Shaman! He will be fine, and you should just patiently wait for them to return on the Path of Glory. Didn't you give him your tooth sword? He'll be fine. He told us to rest assured, right? He knows better."

At the same time, on the other side of the mountains, away from the tribe, Shao Xuan, who "knows better and told them to rest assured", was sighing at the tooth sword.

After confirming the Thorn Black Wind's death, Shao Xuan pulled out the sword. It took him a lot of strength to do that, for the knife was stuck in the Thorn Black Wind's skull.

According to the traces on the ground and the Thorn Black Wind's condition, Shao Xuan suspected perhaps the giant beast had hit on a huge rock when it got flushed by the avalanche. Later, it rolled down the mountain, and the Thorn Black Wind got buried here deep. The broken bones on its body should be caused by the hit, while the tooth sword stabbed deeper into its skull during the process.

One could only say that this Thorn Black Wind had bad luck. If it weren't Shao Xuan who tagged along with the hunting trip, if it were any other newly-awakened kid, such events would not have happened at all. Without Shao Xuan, the Thorn Black Wind would have been able to get its sweet revenge back in the cave.

After pulling out the tooth sword, Shao Xuan noticed that its tip had broken off for about an inch, and there were quite a few breaches on the chipped blade. Besides, the tooth sword was filled with scratch marks.

He wondered what for amazed expression would old Ke's have, when he presents the sword in front of old Ke after he returns.

Also, Ge would probably cry seeing the sword? He had longed for this sword since forever, and he always touched it gently. However, his precious was roughly handled by Shao Xuan and ended up like that...

As Shao Xuan was sighing at the sword, Mao was feeling blank faced with the dead body of that Thorn Black Wind in front of him. He had never expected such a giant monster dying just like that?

In all the stories that he had heard before, primary totemic warriors would never have any chance if faced with such a high level ferocious beast, unless they fought in large quantities. As for newly-awakened warriors, they should never think about confronting something like that! Once they encountered a ferocious beast, old experienced warriors would just command them to stand aside by one single shout of “Kids, get far away!”.

Mao felt more than excited, feeling the hard scales and thorns of the Thorn Black Wind with his palm. Even though he did not help much during the hunting, he felt quite agitated just to witness such special hunting and retaliation battle. Also, the untouchable image of Thorn Black Winds also faded for some extent in his heart.

Just...one touch!

Then another touch!

Oh my goodness, look at the teeth! Definitely have to touch those!

He should be the first one to touch the teeth of an adult Thorn Black Wind among his generation in the tribe! Think about that!

So, when Shao Xuan looked over in Mao's direction, he found an odd image of Mao forcing apart the Thorn Black Wind's jaw with his bare hands, and craning his neck to look inside.

What the fuck are you looking at!!

Shao Xuan rushed to his side and kicked Mao away.

“Aren't you afraid to be bitten to death in case it wasn't dead yet, you moron?”

“Didn’t you say that it is dead already?” Mao swiped off the snow on his clothes and got back on his feet. Not paying any attention to Shao Xuan’s kick, Mao continued to stare at the Thorn Black Wind enthusiastically.

People in the tribe always had a weird enthusiasm towards high-level prey, which Shao Xuan never understood.

“Do you believe whatever I say? What if I was wrong? Didn’t you notice that I was extremely nervous when I pulled out the sword? Or did you not even notice that I stood so far away from that thing after I pulled out the sword?!” Even though Shao Xuan was positive that the Thorn Black Wind was dead, with so many incomprehensible factors in this world, Shao Xuan felt it was better to be more cautious with that unfamiliar species. The chopped off snakehead could sometimes still bite people! Who knew whether that Thorn Black Wind did not have such behavior?

Before he could finish his sentence, Shao Xuan, together with Mao, heard the sound of a wooden whistle. It was not near, but according to its rhythm, it was from their hunting group.

Shao Xuan immediately showed a joyful face and raised up his arm and whistled with curled thumb and index finger in his mouth.

Different rhythms of whistles represented different meanings in the tribe. Shao Xuan knew that because every hunting warrior needed to remember them.

Seeing Shao Xuan made whistle loudly with his fingers, Mao copied his movement as well. However, Mao almost used up all his saliva yet could not make any whistling sound.

Lang Ga, Ang and some other warriors came to find them. When seeing that Shao Xuan and Mao were intact, Lang Ga almost shed some tears in his red eyes. But soon, when they laid eyes on the giant figure in the snow, those warriors nearly slipped down on the ground.

The snow was melting quickly, and the dreadful killer of the night was just lying there with its belly on the ground in silence, lifeless.

# Chapter 52 – All three

---

Translated by Sunyancai

“What...what’s that?” Lang Ga grabbed the long spear in his hands tightly and asked in a shaky voice, as he pointed at it with a shaky finger.

Ang and the others also swallowed down their saliva, waiting for Shao Xuan’s answer. Although they could guess what it was, the guess appeared to be too unbelievable to be true. They could not believe in their guess, and some of them even wondered if it was just a dream.

Yesterday, when they saw the chaos in that cave, many of them had prepared to face the fact that they might never see those two kids again. It was a sleepless night as they had been searching all night. At first they could see some traces of them, for example the items that they lost along the way. However, after they had entered the snowy region, it became nearly impossible for them to find any more footprints so all of the rest relied on luck.

While searching, they had long gone beyond their hunting area. They had met with another hunting group, and the other hunting group joined the search. But the longer it took, the heavier their heart grew. In this forest, it was difficult for cubs to stay alive. Humans and animals were the same at that point.

Now, seeing that Mao and Shao Xuan were both okay, Lang Ga and the others were of course happy, for that was already far better than their expectation. Only few people could escape from a Thorn Black Wind. However, with the big guy lying there, facing the ground, it was like their wildest dream!

“Is it really dead?”

“With the big hole in its head, and so much blood coming out of there, it

should be dead, right?”

After poking it for a few times with the long spear, Lang Ga and the others became bolder. Like Mao’s previous behavior, they now paid no more attention to Shao Xuan and Mao, while all of them circled around the Thorn Black Wind’s dead body, poking at it as a sign to show their amazement.

“It’s the one from last time! Look at its tail, there’s still a wound.”

“Hey, look at the thick skin and the thorns...Oh, it can’t be broken off! Here, Ah-Xuan, hold my stone spear... I don’t believe I can’t break it...”

“The thorns are so hard...If Mai had chopped at the layer of thorns, perhaps its tail wouldn’t have been injured so badly...”

“Hey look at its claw! So sharp...Wow...”

“ ...”

Standing on the side, Shao Xuan got a headache watching these people’s behavior...

A minute ago people were shedding tears on that warm reunion, and one minute later, he and Mao were ignored.

Luckily, Lang Ga still remembered to notify the other warriors down the mountain, and sent a message with that whistle. Originally they planned to take Shao Xuan and Mao down the mountain to meet with the others, but with the dead Thorn Black Wind’s presence, they changed their mind and called the others to come up here. It would be such a waste to just leave the beast to rot here. The warriors would all be pepped up if they carried it back.

The competition between the two hunting teams was quite intense, so every time when they returned, they would brag about their prey. It would be so cool if they could bring back this big ferocious beast.

When Mai and the others arrived, Lang Ga was holding one of the Thorn Black Wind’s big claws in his arms, touching it constantly.

Similar to the others who met the Thorn Black Wind earlier, these people also had their eyes wide open, and were dumbstruck. Later, just as Shao Xuan’s predicted, they too circled around the body immediately.



“Are you hurt?” Mai came to Shao Xuan and Mao, quite relieved.

“I’m fine.” Shao Xuan moved his arms and legs, and jumped for a few times. In fact, he had broken a few ribs and an arm last night, but fortunately it was not severe and now he had recovered mostly already. Probably it was because of the totemic power.

After confirming that Shao Xuan and Mao were really fine, Mai finally relieved himself from the stress and pressure.

Since everyone was asking about their encounter, Shao Xuan briefly explained what had happened last night.

Mao was adding on from the side. He had not completely calmed down before yet, but as they at last were picked up by the group, he finally let loose and became more talkative. So Mao bragged about his experience to the crowd ceaselessly.

Shao Xuan did not tell the others the fact that he could see skeletons, and all he claimed was he had better sight at night than the others. Besides, from start to finish, a large part of it was thanks to luck.

Warriors of the other hunting group also came here with Mai. After listening to Shao Xuan’s story, they sighed, “It turned out you were the ones responsible for the noise up in the mountain last night!”

Last night, people from the other hunting team also heard the rumbling noise up in the mountain. It was just that they were far away from the sound so they did not worry about being influenced by the avalanche. Also, they did not plan to come to search the region, for basically no one would survive from such enormous momentum.

The leader from the other hunting group looked at Mai enviously, for he had foreseen the great welcome that they would receive when they returned on the Path of Glory.

It was absurd for them to just leave the Thorn Black Wind here. Like other prey, they planned to dissect it first.

According to the rules in the hunting teams. Shao Xuan should lead the dissection, for it was his prey. However, Shao Xuan now did not have the strength to do so yet, for the layer of scale of Thorn Black Wind was too thick to cut. Even though there were no scales in its stomach, it was too difficult for Shao Xuan to control the knife. So, under Mai and some other warriors' guidance, Shao Xuan made a few cuts and Mai took it from there.

If the prey were put down by the joint efforts of warriors, the organs that got dissected should be distributed by the leader of the hunting group, and everyone would get his part. As for how people would like to trade with each other, it would be their own business. Beside from the organs, the meat would be distributed later when they get back.

But now, the Thorn Black Wind was hunted down by Shao Xuan and Mao. Even if it was more of a thing of luck, it was their prey. So all the guts belonged to Shao Xuan and Mao, while the others had to trade for it if they wanted any.

After pulling out all its guts, Mai and the other said goodbye to the other hunting group, and they began to pull the Thorn Black Wind back with joint strength.

There was a giant cave excavated near the mountaintop, where the hunting group went to yesterday. Inside the giant cave was a lot of processed game stored, for it was colder there, and the meat could be stored for a longer time. Besides, high level game like the four-fanged wild boar and the Thorn Black Wind would decay more slowly. That was also a reason why totemic warriors preferred to hunt for high level game.

Because of that, each location would have at least two caves. One was for resting, which was located near the mountainside or someplace warmer and concealed. The other was built to store food, and it would be located near the mountain top that was covered with snow all year long. After all, it would take about twenty days for each hunting trip.

After taking the Thorn Black Wind to the food-storing cave, people headed towards the mountainside, because Mai wanted to find another cave for resting. The one they had could not be used anymore.

"Mai! Ah-Xuan! Finally, you came back!" The five people staying at the former

cave were thrilled to see Shao Xuan and Mao coming back, safe and sound. However, they had other things to report.

“Yesterday after you left, we heard the howling of Thorn Black Winds down the mountain. Two of them! I approached to see what was happening, and I saw those two who stopped us earlier, fighting against each other! I did not have the chance to get closer and after observing for a while, I came back.”

Mai thought about it for a while. He commanded the others to stay at the cave for now, and took some mid-level totemic warriors to head down to check it out first.

When Shao Xuan had finished eating some roasted meat, Mai came back hurriedly, with joyful expression on his face. He asked the others to come down and help.

It turned out that the two Thorn Black Winds fought brutally over the control of the territory. One was defeated and had been nearly ripped apart with only skeleton remaining. The other one was badly injured, with quite a few parts revealing the bones, and one of its hind legs was almost broken.

When Mai took the people there, that Thorn Black Wind who won was resting in the forest. The lake was a little far from the battlefield. Since it was badly injured, it probably planned to rest in the woods for a few days, before it would enter the lake.

Unexpectedly, Mai and the others took advantage of its injuries and killed it directly.

“Do you think that the first one knew that these two would have such a bloody fight when it asked for their help?” Lang Ga asked.

Shao Xuan was thinking about the same question. Perhaps that one did know what would happen when it sacrificed its territory to ask for help. If things went smoothly, it could kill the kids in the hunting group, and then wait patiently for the two down the mountain to fight each other to the death. When one was defeated and the other was weak, it would go back and take back its territory. Hence, it could not only get its revenge, it might be able to expand its land by having the other two killed.

No one knew the truth, for all three of them were dead and their bodies were dragged to the food-storing cave by the hunting group.

# Chapter 53 – Wild Wolves

---

Translated by Sunyancai

A herd of giant-antlered deers was wandering along a stream, while some predator's movements nearby was making them anxious.

About a few hundred meters away from the herd, Shao Xuan hid himself behind some dense branches as he stood on a tall tree. He looked in the deers' direction through the leaves.

It was the fifth day since they came out for hunting, and since they had hunted enough game already around their first location, Mai planned to take the hunting group to head to the second location.

The second location was located at the other side of the basin, so they had to go through the basin and then climb over yet another mountain to reach it. With Shao Xuan and Mao tagging along with the hunting group, Mai did not intend to move straight through the basin. Instead, Mai told the group to march along the basin's edge. The distance was longer this way, but it was not as dangerous as walking straight through.

During their journey, the group encountered a large herd of giant-antlered deers, with a pack of wolves following them. Mai commanded the others to hide themselves first and then asked Shao Xuan to observe the wolves in the forest. Shao Xuan kept a wolf himself, and Mai was worried that he hadn't seen a real wolf in the wild. In fact, Caesar was not considered a real wolf in most of warriors' eyes, so he would hate it if Shao Xuan's impression of wolves was based on Caesar's tame behaviour.

However, Mai and the others actually worried for nothing. Of course Shao

Xuan knew what wolves were like in the wild, or else he wouldn't be treating Caesar as a dog.

But the wolves here were much stronger than the wolves that Shao Xuan had seen in his last life. They had stronger muscles and were very destructive. Judging from their head and jaws, one could tell that they had much more force in their bites. In fact, they would hunt for giant preys that were much bigger than themselves in sizes.

Now those wolves were just lurking around, for before any action, they had to assess the risk first.

"They prefer to avoid the deers with bigger antlers, like those ones." Mai pointed some out for Shao Xuan.

Among the herd of the giant-antlered deer, there were a lot of male deer with big antlers, some of which had really unique antlers. Unlike other deer, their antlers were not like branches that stretched out, but forked out backwards several times covering their whole bodies. Those were extremely difficult to deal with.

Shao Xuan had seen similar antlers in the tribe, for some people were wearing those when attending the ritual ceremony.

"It's going to happen!" Lang Ga said in a low voice as he squatted on the tree beside them. He was quite excited. In fact, Lang Ga became excited every time he saw a pack of wolves hunting together. He thought that he could learn a lot from their hunting skills and fighting.

"The best way to hunt down herd creatures like the giant-antlered deer is to make them run." Mai whispered.

Shao Xuan looked at the wolves and noticed that at first the wolves were just like taking a stroll, but then they gradually split up and slowly approached the deer herd. Some of the wolves even tried to intimidate the deers on the edge.

Because of the approaching wolf pack, the deer herd began to panic, and quickly there was chaos in the herd from the wolves' threat. The deers began to run, and some of them even headed in different directions.

The wolves separated as they chased after the giant-antlered deer herd,

searching for suitable targets.

“Baby deers would be protected in the center of the herd, with strong and big individuals protecting them. Normally, the wolf pack would not try to hunt them down. But as for those who ran towards different directions, it was pretty easy for the wolves to pick out those wounded or old ones. Once those weak or the wounded ones were spotted, all wolves would give up chasing after the others, and focus on those less-abled ones.” Mai pointed at the running wolves and explained to Shao Xuan. After some hesitation, he added, “So even if you are wounded, you should never show your weakness in front of them. Also, never show the pack your back, which is too dangerous.”

Shao Xuan had not found out which of the deers were the less-abled ones, but one of the wolves suddenly sped up and chased after one particular deer. Soon, six or seven wolves joined the chase, as the time went by, more and more wolves joined the chase.

The biggest and strongest wolf among the pack should be the leader, and it was the one that started the attack.

However, it was a shame that because of the help from some other deers, their prey finally slipped away.

“They won’t give up without a prey.” Lang Ga was positive.

At that end, the wolves came back together soon after the failure. Perhaps they were in tumult because of the failure in hunting this time. However, the chaos soon calmed down by the leader. It howled at the sky and Shao Xuan felt that it must be increasing the morale.

Soon, the wolf pack started yet another attack towards the deer herd.

One wolf focused on an old deer, while the others quickly joined in.

With last time’s experience and the lesson that they learnt, this time they chased the deer to an empty ground and separated it from the herd. So it fell into a situation of isolation and helplessness.

Seeing such a crazy chase, and even though he was looking from quite a distance, and was already mentally prepared, Shao Xuan was still deeply shocked.

Perhaps the biggest fear for the prey was to encounter such well-organized predators with ferocious eyes, and being chased after by a group of them.

The leader was rushing in the front of the pack, and it suddenly pounced at the deer's back when it got near. The sharp teeth pierced through the deer's skin, and its big body, which was even larger than most normal wolves, directly slammed on the deer like a hammer.

Although the old giant-antlered deer was a few times bigger than the wolf's leader, it staggered from the pounce and almost fell down to the ground. It was just a beginning. After the leader wolf, soon other wolves in the pack began to attack as well. Their teeth went through its skin and pierced its muscles.

The giant-antlered deer that was besieged almost became a "wolf-hanger". Finally, it slowed down and fell, but its body did not stop struggling until its last breath.

Maybe a wolf alone was not lethal at all, but dozens of the terrifying predators combined were a real danger. Because of such hunting tactics, they were able to scare off most of the predators in this region.

"Sometimes I would rather confront ferocious beasts like the Thorn Black Wind, than face a pack of wolves." Some warrior in the hunting group said.

"Luckily, Thorn Black Winds prefer to live alone. Even if they united temporarily, they wouldn't be able to fight like that."

They liked to live alone and despised teamwork. It was rare enough for those two Thorn Black Winds to cooperate to block their way, but they would never fight together desperately against the warriors.

"But then, I have not figured out where they keep their baby wolves by now." Lang Ga looked around and said. It was totally a coincidence that they picked up Caesar when that little cub was alone.

Most of the social animals did a good job protecting their babies. For example, the giant-antlered deer or the wolf pack, which was about to start eating. However, for animals like the Thorn Black Winds, no matter how powerful and arrogant they were, their babies might get targeted by other



ferocious beasts if they did not take good care of their babies. Even without Ah-Fei, there might have been other hunters like tigers, leopards and wolves.

“After all, the wounded, the old, and especially the babies are best hunting targets in the wilderness.” Said Mai.

Also, down in the bottom of the lake, where that Thorn Black Wind which lost its baby lived, there were numerous animals’ bones, regardless of the age or the size.

The world in the forest was just as brutal as that, filled with killing and being killed.

“So, grow up quickly!” Qiao smiled at Shao Xuan and Mao.

After collecting their equipment, the hunting group headed to the second location.

As they were running and jumping on the boughs, Shao Xuan looked back at the wolf pack that had started eating.

The strong leader howled and brutally bit the others that approached to the prey. It used that way to defend its dominant position in the pack. While the others that were not bitten by the leader yet, quickly nibbled on the giant-antlered deer, as if the prey would stand up and run away if they were to slow to eat.

Compared with that, what was Caesar doing now, as he was treated and kept like a dog since its childhood? Was he lazily gnawing on a bone while bathing in the sun?

# Chapter 54 – Stone worm below the mountain

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Sponsored by Anon1 and Nathanael

In the wild, the vulnerable and weak ones were more susceptible to attacks, so Shao Xuan had been paying extra attention to the surroundings. He was merely a newly-awakened boy, and in the eyes of animals, especially ferocious beasts, he was one of the two weakest ones in the group.

When they arrived at the other side of the basin, it was almost dusk. Shao Xuan thought that there would be a cave to rest, after all, the rule in the hunting team was-No hunting at night. Staying out at night was far too dangerous, and resting without a cave also seemed to be unsafe in such an environment.

To Shao Xuan's surprise, the cave of the second location was not on this side of the mountain.

The second hunting location was located at the other side of the mountain, but...

Shao Xuan looked up at the mountain, whose peak and border could not be seen at all. It would be extremely difficult for them to climb over that mountain, even with the strength of a totemic warrior, it might take them more than a

whole day to get there. Let alone that it was already late, and there were some glinting eyes staring at them from the woods.

Instead of stopping there, Mai continued to lead the group up the mountain.

Near the mountainside there was indeed a cave, a big one, which was neither formed naturally, nor excavated by people from the tribe. In fact, it was drilled out by some kind of creature.

Specifically, it was a passage. Every time when hunting groups came here, they would have to go through the mountain, to get to the other side.

On the wall, near the entrance of the cave, there were a lot of names carved out. At the end of the name list, Shao Xuan found Mai's name carved on the wall.

Every group leader would carve his name on the wall when he led his group through the passage. All the names above were carved by former leaders of hunting groups. When Mai becomes too old to serve as the hunting group's leader, there would be a new leader selected, and the new leader would carve his name after Mai when he comes here one day. For them, it was a symbol of honor.

Before they enter the cave, warriors in the hunting group needed to hold a small ceremony, to show their appreciation towards their ancestors who had established this hunting route.

Mai put down the long spear beside his feet, and got down on one knee. With his palms facing each other, he raised his hands in front of his forehead, and bowed towards the wall full of names.

"To our ancestors!!"

"Thank the ancestors!"

Shao Xuan followed the example of the other warriors of their hunting group and gave the same salute to show appreciation.

It's said that, every hunting route that the hunting groups went along were established by the ancestors. Long time ago, when there weren't enough men in the tribe, there weren't many hunting groups. So every time they went

hunting, they would try new routes. One time they would take this route, next time they would take another.

Later on, there were more people in the hunting group, so different teams were established and each hunting group would follow one of the routes that was established by their ancestors.

The reason for following the routes was to avoid those unforeseen and unpredictable factors. What kinds of animals lived along the route? How many of them were ferocious beasts? How was the geography? All those questions could be answered from the experiences which were passed on by the previous generations. However, if you went on a new route, you might not be able to quickly react towards incidents, which would lead to a huge loss.

Of course, the hunting route was just a rough direction made by the ancestors, and people could feel free to make smaller decisions along the path. For example, the route for Mai's group was to climb over the mountain where the first location was, and then go through the basin, and then get to the other side of this mountain.

What if some in the tribe had their own ideas of establishing a new route? Well, only if the Shaman and the Chief both agreed to it, else the others would just forget about it.

What... are you delusional? Trying to create a new hunting route by your own?

Could you be stronger than the ancestors?

No, you couldn't!

Also, new hunting routes could not be established easily nor freely. Unless you think the old route was not good?

It didn't make any sense! You dare doubt the ancestors? Do you have a death wish?!

...

People in the tribe had a peculiar, stubborn attitude towards things that were

passed down by the ancestors. Even though some of the decisions were not quite suitable in Shao Xuan's eyes, however people in the tribe respected them as sacred rules.

Except for the loyalty towards the totem, people in the tribe had reverence and immense trust for the ancestors which went beyond Shao Xuan's imagination. Even if the ancestors climbed out of their graves and claimed that there was only one moon in the sky, people in the tribe would nod and agree without any second thought.

That was also the result achieved by all those years of brainwashing education from the Shamans. Generations after generations, the same ideas were passed down.

When the group leaders were out on a mission, they always thought that they could only face their ancestors with integrity if they went on the pre-existing routes. It was also considered as the respect towards the ancestors that established the hunting routes. Looking at the names on the list at the entrance of the cave, those leaders shared similar thoughts.

After entering the cave and starting a bonfire, warriors in the hunting group did not walk any deeper inside. According to old habits, they would spend the night near the entrance and then head inside early tomorrow morning. Going through the cave would cost some time, for it was not a straight route.

"How come there is a cave that connects both sides of the mountain?" Shao Xuan asked Lang Ga when they were resting beside the bonfire.

"This cave was already there when our ancestors first came here. It's said that a giant king stone worm lives in this mountain, and all the curvy paths in the cave were drilled out by it." Lang Ga said.

"Stone worm?!" Shao Xuan was stunned, for the round passage was at least ten meters high. Also, Mai and the others had mentioned that aside from the passage that connected both sides of the mountain, there were lots of other passages that went up or down. Who could've imagined that a cave and passages of such scale were drilled out by a stone worm?!

How big would it be?

The stone worms that Shao Xuan used as fishing baits could never be compared with it!

However, it was a story from the ancestors who established this hunting route, and it remains to be confirmed whether there really was a stone worm.

“Then... have any of our ancestors seen the stone worm below the mountain?” Shao Xuan asked. It had been many years since the first hunting group came, even if the warriors were only using the cave as a passage, someone should have seen the stone worm, right?

“I don’t think anyone has seen it.” Seeing that Shao Xuan was still in doubt, Lang Ga explained more, “But if you listen carefully, you can hear the sound created by the King Stone Worm.”

Shao Xuan listened carefully, and there were indeed some whirring sounds. However, they weren’t necessarily caused by the stone worm. Since there were lots of caves and holes, when wind blew inside from one hole and went out through the other holes, it would also create such sounds.

Although his heart was filled with doubts, Shao Xuan figured he would not get another answer seeing Lang Ga’s attitude. Instead of arguing with those stubborn people, Shao Xuan changed the subject, “So what’s on the other side of the mountain? Are there any differences?”

As expected, Lang Ga’s attention soon was shifted.

“Differences? In fact, the biggest difference is that there are lot of giant birds on the other side.” Lang Ga stretched out his arms to gesticulate. Although Lang Ga’s arms were limited in length, judging from his exaggerated facial expression, Shao Xuan knew that the birds must be quite big.

In fact, recalling carefully, Shao Xuan noticed that since he had entered the woods, there weren’t many large fierce birds. Even though Shao Xuan felt that some of the birds they saw were pretty big, based on Lang Ga’s description, on the other side of the mountain, there lived some bigger and fiercer birds. Perhaps the feathery decorations that some warriors put on, at the ritual ceremony of the Snow Festival were obtained on the other side of the mountain.



# Chapter 55 – So unlucky

---

Translated by Sunyancai

After a night's sleep, the hunting group gathered their things and started to go through the mountain early the next day.

Shao Xuan had a pretty good sleep and he did not see anything terrible in his dreams.

"Everyone, stay close together, especially Ah-Xuan and Mao. This is your first time going this way, so I need you to promise to focus, for you may never have the chance to come out if you get left behind." Mai said seriously.

He was not trying to intimidate but only telling the truth. Even the few generations of their ancestors paid a heavy price before they could finally find the correct way out when this hunting route was first established. In this huge maze, numerous warriors went in but never managed to find their way out.

"Okay. We'll pay extra attention. You rest assured." Said Shao Xuan.

Mao also nodded. In the hunting group, he had always been disciplined, and he also knew that it was always better to listen to the elder warriors' words.

It became darker as they went deeper inside. People in the hunting group were separated into a few smaller groups, and there was someone holding a torch in every small group.

When they left the entrance behind, the only light source came from the torches. It was not very bright, but good enough for them to see their feet.

It was just like how Mai had described it to Shao Xuan, in this cave, the deeper you went in, the more complicated you would find it to be. There were



many intersections and crossings inside. Sometimes you would even find three forks when you make a simple turn. However, the hunting group would only choose only one of them, which they had always chosen in the past.

Even if there was more than one way that connected with the outside, someone who didn't know the way would easily get lost when he went inside. Perhaps he would return to his starting point after walking in circles.

Probably because there was more than one exit, people didn't feel suffocated inside, there was always a gust of breeze, with a rhythmic pulse, which sounded like the breath of some large animal.

Currently, they didn't see any aggressive creatures, but it was said that some worms and spiders lived in this cave.

The paths inside were not only curvy, but also rose and dipped constantly. Sometimes the path headed down, while sometimes one had to climb up a really steep slope, during which all the totemic warriors needed to pay attention not to be left behind. Basically, those who were familiar with the path the most were those experienced old warriors in the hunting group. Those young warriors like Lang Ga might not remember the route clearly.

Actually, someone had thought about making marks on the wall before. However, every time when they went inside again, those marks made last time would completely disappear. All these events together, made the hunting team increase their believe in the ancestors conclusion, that there must be a king stone worm living inside this mountain. It was just that no one had seen it yet.

So later on, warriors in the hunting team stopped trying to leave a mark on the wall. Also, they tried to be quiet and make no loud sound when they went through the cave, in order to not wake up that giant creature living inside.

In the tribe, the stone worms seemed harmless. However, it was not the same when it came to the king stone worm. Or else how could it be addressed as "King"?

Just the same as when they were travelling through the woods, Shao Xuan and Mao were in the middle of the group, in order to get better protection from the others.

Shao Xuan used his special ability to observe the other parts of the cave. Sometimes he would see some worms of relatively larger sizes, however, those worms did not attack the hunting group, and the warriors in the hunting group also did not actively provoke them. First of all, they did not know how many similar insects were living together in the cave, and it would be pretty annoying if they drew the attention of a swarm of them. Secondly, no one wanted to make a scene in the cave, for it would be a real disaster if they woke up the big guy in the mountain.

If it was a straight route, it wouldn't have taken them such a long time to come out. But in fact, they only heard Mai saying "we are almost there" when they had been walking for half a day later.

After yet another turn, they finally came to a tunnel with a fork. Only one of them was the way out, but right now, both passages were blocked by spiders.

That was a kind of eyeless spider. Perhaps their eyes had degenerated because they had been living in the dark cave for many generations. The body of this spider was not large, but they did have pretty long legs, which could cover the entrance of the passage.

Mai and two other warriors who were at the head of the group used torches and long spears to silently threaten the spiders blocking the entrances. The spiders felt the fierce heat from the flames waving at them, and retreated.

On the passage that led to the outside, only two eyeless spiders were blocking their way. Compared with the other passage, there were much less spiders. Because of the waving torch, spiders in both sides began to move and they were threateningly waving their pincers and fangs towards the hunting group.

"Ignore them. Let's just go!" On his side, Mai had already driven away those two eyeless spiders, and he shouted out to tell the other warriors to keep up with him. Based on his experience, the eyeless spiders would rarely fight persistently against humans, for their prey were the kinds of worms in the cave. So in theory, as long as they stayed calm and tried not to irritate them, they could avoid conflict with a little compromise on both sides.

However, the accident happened just at that time. Shao Xuan in the middle of the group felt a chill on his neck and was immediately alarmed. Glaring at the

eyeless spiders with their trembling pincers, he realized that it was not them!

Shao Xuan suddenly looked up, only to find a black shadowy whip drop down like lightning and all Shao Xuan could do was block it with his sword. However, he got coiled up tight by that whip and was pulled up.

It all happened in the blink of an eye, and since most warriors in the hunting group were focusing on guarding against the eyeless spiders nearby, nobody expected there to be something else above them. It seemed not to be the eyeless spiders, but whoever saw it did not have the time to stop it.

“Ah-Xuan!”

“Mai! Ah-Xuan got pulled away!”

“Why is there a hole above? It wasn’t there when we came in last time!”

“What was that?!”

At that time, the crowd did not intend to make any compromise. They fought fiercely to force back those eyeless spiders, they even wounded a few of them. However, Shao Xuan was dragged away from above, and it was not so easy for them to climb up. Mai commanded the others to deal with the eyeless spiders, while he climbed up along the wall into that hole. A while later, Mai came back with a pale face.

Whatever creature dragged Shao Xuan away, it was too fast for Mai to chase. When Mai climbed up there, it had already gone, and Shao Xuan’s shouting could not be heard again. What’s more, there were different forks when Mai went up. Different forks were stretching towards different directions. After several attempts, Mai had to go back without success.

In the heart of the mountain, those creatures which had been living in this darkness for a long period of time had a far better understanding of the cave.

Mai had to go back to the group out of the worries for the others. He was the group leader after all, and he had to be responsible to the other thirty warriors.

Mai went back to deal with the growing number of eyeless spiders with the others in the group, after he punched at the wall in anger.

The situation had grown more and more bad for them, and warriors in the hunting group had no other option than to rush out along that passage. It was not far from the outside, and they all knew that none of the spiders would chase them out, for they could not endure the light.

It happened a lot that a hunting group had one or two casualties. This time it was Shao Xuan, later on the others could be facing the same fate. Those young warriors like Lang Ga were not that sensible and they wanted to go inside again to search for Shao Xuan. However, they were stopped by the others, the older warriors were already used to that kind of farewells.

Many warriors were still sighing in their mind. Why did Ah-Xuan have to be so unlucky? He was in the center of every storm, and it was his first hunting trip!

Not long after, people in the hunting group saw traces of light, and those eyeless spiders stopped their chase.

While on the other side, Shao Xuan who got dragged away was not feeling good as well.

The thing that pulled him up was a kind of insect that lived in the cave. It was a little smaller than the eyeless spider, but was just as fierce and fast.

The thing that coiled up Shao Xuan was the insect's feeler, on whose tip there were hook-like serrations. If it weren't for Shao Xuan's quick reaction to hold up the sword against those serrations, he could've easily gotten wounded when he was dragged away. The sword and serrations even created crackling sounds as they rubbed against each other.

After struggling really hard, Shao Xuan only got loosened up just a little bit. After a sharp turn, Shao Xuan was directly slammed onto a stone wall and he nearly threw out all his breakfast.

With pain all over his body, Shao Xuan put himself together and finally pulled out his tooth sword, which had already lost its tip, and fiercely chopped on that feeler.

Pa!

The feeler which was binding Shao Xuan was chopped off, and its owner began to jump up and down out of the pain of losing its feeler. In the

meantime, Shao Xuan was finally freed, but he rolled over and fell into another hole, which headed down steeply. Before he could stand up on his feet, he slid down along that slope.

He did not know how long he had been sliding but when he could finally stand up, Shao Xuan felt dizzy in the head and dim in sight. He felt painful and sour all over his body, for he had hit the wall for quite a few times and was dragged a long way.

It took him some time to catch his breath, after which Shao Xuan wanted to go back along the same way, for it would become more and more dangerous if he stayed there for too long.

Just when he was about to climb up the slope, Shao Xuan heard the sound of a breeze coming from a tunnel in his back. It was like a breeze, but with the rhythm of a breath.

# Chapter 56 – The King Stone Worm

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Initially, it was just a slight indistinct ‘whirring’ noise, it could’ve easily been confused with the other noises among the tunnel. However, it gradually became clearer.

Shao Xuan thought about the story he heard from Lang Ga, which said that there was a king stone worm living inside the cave. Earlier, he did not quite believe in the story, after all, so many hunting warriors had been here before, and none of them had ever witnessed the legendary king stone worm. Even in the stories from their ancestors, it merely was a conjecture.

There was indeed a ‘whirring’ noise made by the wind inside the cave, but now, Shao Xuan was positive that it was not only the ‘whirring’ noise of the wind, but also the sound of breathing mixed in with the noise. What’s more, the breathing was gradually sounding closer while becoming more distinct.

Shao Xuan flexed his whole body, and he moved his legs to climb up along the slope. The slope and walls were a little bit more steep and slippery than the paths that the hunting group walked along, so climbing up the slope was more difficult. Shao Xuan didn’t dare to use the sword, for he was worried that the sound might awaken the King Stone Worm. Mai and the others warned that they should try to be as quiet as possible when they walked, and they certainly had a point.

The breathing sound was coming closer and closer, at a speed, far greater than Shao Xuan’s expectation, and it seemed to be close by in the blink of an eye.

It was a little moist inside. An odour of limes filled the air, and the odour grew denser as time went by. Shao Xuan could clearly feel the rising humidity inside, while the wall he was climbing on had tiny droplets of water, which made the wall even more slippery than before, and the climb became harder than ever. Shao Xuan was finally able to stabilize himself after skidding a few times.

It was impossible for him to climb up anymore!

He could feel a layer of a slimy liquid between the wall and his palms, and it felt the same under his feet. It was hard for him to maintain his stability. He couldn't afford to slack off even a bit, because if he did, he would just slip down along the path.

What the fuck!

It makes no sense!!

A moment earlier, the wall in the cave was fine. Even though it was a bit more slippery than the paths they used to walk along, and the slope was a little steeper, it wouldn't have been a difficult task for Shao Xuan to climb up, based on his ability. However, it hadn't been long, but the wall had changed so much!

However, at that moment, there was no time for Shao Xuan to think. The rhythmic breath was almost underneath Shao Xuan's body!

Shao Xuan slipped, rolled and fell down onto a relatively flat surface, but after a few steps, he could see the tunnel stretching down. Shao Xuan could only see a small part of the tunnel from where he was at, which meant that he didn't know whether there were any forks down the main path, and if so, how many forks were there... What should he do if it was really the King Stone Worm coming up? What should he do if the King Stone Worm creeps along the same tunnel that he was at?

Shao Xuan's exerted all his strength on his fingers and the tips of his fingers nearly stabbed into the wall. But that was all he could do, and his fingertips could not go any deeper inside. The stones were quite hard. Perhaps he could dig in a little more if he used his totemic power. However, Shao Xuan didn't dare do that, for some high level ferocious beasts were very sensitive towards totemic powers. Mai and the others didn't dare to use totemic power when they were walking through the mountain.

Shao Xuan held himself on the wall. He was so tense, that he was a little stiff all over the body. On his face there was also a layer of moisture. Perhaps it was the water drops; perhaps it was his own sweat.

It was not sultry in the cave. Instead, Shao Xuan felt that it became more and more cold inside. He did not know whether the coldness was his own illusion or if it was really that cold. Also, the smell of lime grew stronger as time went by.

Shao Xuan looked up and the scenery in his vision had changed.

In Shao Xuan's view, unlike the grey stone wall, the water drops appeared to be pale white. Quickly the color of white had covered up the grey stone wall, and the coverage quickly expanded towards the top, which meant that the top of the cave was experiencing the same changes as the stone wall that Shao Xuan was clinging on.

Whir...whir...

The sound was even closer, and it sounded just beneath Shao Xuan.

Together with the breathing sound, there was also a sound of something creeping, as if some creature was crawling.

Shao Xuan silently moved closer to the wall, and he carefully controlled his breathing and heartbeat, to conceal his presence. It seemed like he had already merged himself with the environment, and even if Lang Ga and the others were standing right there, there was a high chance that they might not be able to detect him.

Listening to the sound beneath, Shao Xuan thought that if the thing down there really came his way, he would have no other choice but to risk it all. If fingers weren't useful anymore, he would use the sword to keep himself steady. If the sword wasn't enough, he would use an additional spearhead! That way, he should be able to climb up, right?

Although he was dragged there by that insect, he had all his equipment with him. And even though he would probably draw that thing's attention because of the use of tools, it had to be that way, for life was the top most priority for Shao Xuan.

Aside from the breathing sound, there also seemed to be the sound of a heart



beating.

Dug-dug.....Dug-dug.....Dug-dug

It was obviously not loud, but one would feel like they were being hammered on the chest. One hammerstrike after another, which could make the blood surge, and the heart, lurch.

It was like a war drum in a quiet battlefield. And the whole cave seemed to start trembling from that rhythm.

The pressure came right after the sound.

Or perhaps, it could be called an aura?

Shao Xuan had difficulty breathing, as if heavy dark clouds were pressing down on his head. When not relying on totemic power, Shao Xuan's physique was still a bit too weak.

Just when Shao Xuan was paying extra attention to the approaching sound, and prepared to use his totemic power and pull out the sword to climb up, the breathing sound and thunder-like heartbeats gradually faded away.

It seemed that beneath the tunnel, there were other forked paths. Luckily, that King Stone Worm did not come to the tunnel Shao Xuan was at.

When the sounds vanished, Shao Xuan finally relaxed his muscles. It almost cost all his strength to hold on earlier, and now he felt exhausted.

There was no action, no combat, no killing, nothing at all. All he did was holding onto the wall with everything he had, however, it was more tiring than fighting against the Thorn Black Wind. Just because of that, Shao Xuan couldn't control his hands well, and in a second, he slipped and fell on the same spot where he had landed before.

Shao Xuan heard his own heart beating hard like a striking drum. He calmed down, after a while.

Shao Xuan noticed something, and he looked back up, at the wall that he had grabbed on. In his special view, the wall was originally covered with a layer of whiteness. However, the color of white faded away, and the change was

happening gradually, as the color of white reduced more and more.

The air in the cave turned back to normal, and became less moist. The smell of limes also disappeared gradually.

Feeling a little itchy on the face, Shao Xuan looked up and rubbed at wall, only to find stone chips, and powder falling down. On both of his palms, there was also a layer of hard, debris like chips, and a layer of powder. He clenched his fists and felt chips and powder falling down again.

Shao Xuan climbed up towards the top, as he thought about something. Without the layer of slimy liquid, the climbing became much easier.

After a careful and thorough examination of the wall, Shao Xuan noticed that his fingerprints from when he climbed on the wall had disappeared, as if he had never been there.

No wonder all the marks made by the hunting warriors disappeared when the next time they went in. Perhaps the same thing happened.

The cave restored its original appearance, as if no creature had come.

Shao Xuan did not go down, instead, he chose to continue to climb up. He wanted to see if he could get back to the path which the hunting group took earlier, by climbing up.

He tried hard to climb up, but as he set eyes upon the surroundings, Shao Xuan was totally stunned.

Here, it should be the place where he chopped off that insect's antennae. However, now there was no chopped off antennae, or anything else for that matter. No insect, no eyeless spiders, no sounds, and no traces of any struggles.

It was like everything was re-instated!

In front of Shao Xuan, there were three forked paths, which looked quite alike. There was no trace of any creature, so he could not tell these three paths apart at all!

So, from which forked path was he dragged there?

Shao Xuan tried hard to recall, but he found that it was impossible! He had no idea which path to choose.

Taking a deep breath, Shao Xuan clenched his fists, and cursed in a low voice, “What the fuck!”

# Chapter 57 – Intuition

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Outside the cave, Mai, Lang Ga and the others were waiting. According to the traditions in hunting groups, if anyone had an accident inside, the others would wait outside for a whole day, after which, they would continue hunting.

Every year, they would lose some of their comrades, but the hunting mission had to be carried on. Everybody was the same.

“Ah-Xuan should be fine, right?” Lang Ga walked back and forth at the exit of the cave, looking anxious. He wanted to go inside to search for him, but without knowing the correct path, he would be of no help even if he went inside. He hadn’t even memorized the route near the entrance and exit, let alone all those complicated forked paths, and turns inside. He wasn’t as knowledgeable about the tunnels and caves, as those old warriors like Mai. Now, since all the experienced ones had their hands tied, he had no other option but to wait there.

“Hum. Ah-Xuan is a lucky boy. He could kill a Thorn Black Wind, so he could probably come out from the mountain.” Ang added.

The others also echoed with the same theory, but some experienced warriors had a different opinion. Unlike young warriors like Lang Ga, they had gone through much more than the young ones ever had. And even if they had not experienced it in person, they had heard the stories.

The situation in the mountain was much trickier than meeting a Thorn Black Wind. Killing a Thorn Black Wind was more of a lucky shot, let alone that the Thorn Black Wind had much lower fighting ability in a cold area, which led to

the fact that it was killed by Shao Xuan. However, it was a different situation inside.

When ancestors were establishing the hunting route, they had sacrificed many people's lives to finally find a proper way to go through. However, Shao Xuan was nothing but a newly-awakened boy, who was attending the hunting mission for the first time. Regarding capability, he was not better than anyone in the hunting group.

Even though they were comforting Lang Ga, and the other young warriors, that Ah-Xuan was a lucky boy, deep down in their hearts, those experienced warriors were thinking about why that kid was so unlucky... Earlier he had just survived from the Thorn Black Wind, however, just in the blink of an eye, he was accidentally trapped in the mountain, nowhere to be found.

New people joined, while some people would leave, or even die, depending on their fortune. Even the ancestors could not run away from their destiny, how could Ah-Xuan survive again? From the day that this route was established, no one ever came out after being left behind. It was just a pity that this time, a talented boy was lost here. They wished to see him walk on the Path of Glory when they returned, but nobody expected that he would be resting in the mountain forever. Well...

Of course, Mai wasn't in a good mood, for they had lost someone in the mountain. What's more, it was the one that he favored very much. Just because he knew what Shao Xuan was facing with, and no one ever came out before him, Mai sat there still, in silence. He regretted very much, that he wasn't more cautious. If he had noticed the hole above, if he hadn't paid so much attention on the eyeless spiders, perhaps nothing would have happened.

In the meantime, Shao Xuan was in a dilemma, not knowing which way to choose.

There were three forking paths, and only one of them would lead him to the outside, from where he was dragged along. And no one knew where the other two paths led to. One misstep, he probably won't be able to come out alive.

Shao Xuan took a deep breath to ease his anxious nerves.

Recalling his limited experiences, Shao Xuan remembered that at the very

night that they were awakened, the Shaman had said to them when he was giving the “lecture” ... “The power of the flame will guide you. Just like in ancient times, our ancestors used fire to light up the night.”

Intuition...

The intuition brought by the flame...

Shao Xuan stimulated the totemic power in his body, and the flame wrapping on the flaming horns totem suddenly grew brighter in his mind.

Shao Xuan glared at the three paths in silence.

After a while, Shao Xuan lifted his foot and walked into the path in the middle.

It was very quiet in the cave, no eyeless spider or any other kinds of worms could be seen. Shao Xuan walked down along the path, but soon enough...

Damn it!!

What intuition?

What “The power of the flame will guide you”?

Everything was fake!!

The Shaman was just an old quack!

If he were not afraid of waking that king stone worm, Shao Xuan would probably curse out loud.

He had confirmed that the path he went along now was not the same as the path through which he was dragged in, even if he didn’t remember which path it was, he still remembered the exact number of times his body was smacked against the wall.

When he was dragged all the way in by that insect, his body was smacked against the wall, every time there was a turn. However, now Shao Xuan was passing through more turns than before! Also, the surroundings felt totally alien to him, and he didn’t have any familiar feelings! So, was his intuition on strike?

Shao Xuan rubbed his head leaning against the wall.

Why did he have such bad luck?

He had done nothing evil in the tribe, instead, he had helped those weak kids back in the orphan cave. Why did bad things always happened to him?

Unless...

Shao Xuan thought about the ritual ceremony in the Snow Festival. When others were praying, he was thinking about the changes on his body. Also, he did not join the crowd to sing the Song of Hunting, but faked it like he was really singing. Maybe, he had to face the consequences of his prior unjust actions now?

So the totem and flame that the Shaman had been talking about, which were supposed to be the guardians of the warriors, chose not to protect him?

That was bullshit!

If it could really protect, then wouldn't that mean the ancestors in Lang Ga's stories shouldn't have died in here.

Thinking about that, Shao Xuan's face froze. If there was light inside, one could've seen traces of icy feelings in his eyes.

Shao Xuan was leaning against the wall, but he suddenly jumped up in the air.

The next moment after his jump, the position he was standing at earlier were whipped hard by a shadow.

Screech~~

The serrations on the end of the antenna, cut the stone wall, which created a screeching noise.

It was that insect, the one that dragged him here!

After being caught once, he learned his lesson, if he fell into that same trap a second time, he would be considered stupid!

In Shao Xuan's view, that insect was formed by teeny tiny bones, and the skeleton didn't seem rigid and strong. However, in fact, it was not true. Those tiny bones could, not only hold the insect's flesh tight, but also ensure that it could move faster, and when it was moving in the tunnel, it created barely any

sound!

Aside from the tiny bones, the insect had a layer of hard shell on its back to protect it from the outside. The most effective weapon was its antennae. But it was not a pair of the antennae now, since one of the antenna got chopped off by Shao Xuan earlier, when it caught him.

However, compared to the Thorn Black Wind's armor of hard scales, this insect's defence was much more vulnerable. Its advantage was to sneak attack and take the other party by surprise, but when it came to actual combat, it could be defeated.

They were in the territory which was under the king stone worm's control. Of course the king stone worm would allow some nobodies to live in the mountain, but it wouldn't endure if anything threatening existed.

Obviously, Shao Xuan was not the only one that bore a grudge. Although he hated that insect for bringing him there. At the same time, the insect had deep hatred towards Shao Xuan for chopping off one of its antennae.

Since its antenna hit the air and missed Shao Xuan, that insect was quite annoyed. It gave a violent vibe and stood half up, with two pairs of legs to keep its balance, while the first two sickle-like forelimbs slashed towards Shao Xuan, with a gust of icy wind on the blades. It jumped down at Shao Xuan ruthlessly, as if it had already lost its mind.

Shao Xuan also jumped up high and stepped hard on top of the cave, which cracked the stone instantly.

With the force of the recoil, Shao Xuan twisted his body in the middle of the air. Instead of retreating, he went forward and rushed towards that insect with the sword in his hand.

In here, the insect had a clear advantage of knowing the place better, so Shao Xuan knew in his heart that he might not be able to outrun the insect.

They were both vindictive, so of course revenge was a dish that would be better served when it's cold. Also, based on the insect's acting style, one had to fight a quick battle without stalling, if one intended to kill it.

The boy and the insect were originally about ten meters away, which was



almost the same length as its antennae. However, with Shao Xuan rushing towards the insect in full speed, the ten-meter distance was shortened to zero in the blink of an eye.

The forelimbs of the insect were still waving as it stood half-up, which nearly blocked the narrow path. It created a whirlpool of blades, which hurt Shao Xuan's face as he got near.

He used his tooth sword to block one of the forelimbs, and the exploding force created by the collision, nearly numbed Shao Xuan's whole arm. However, he took no break and he promptly rolled and jumped over the whirlpool of blades, and suddenly arrived at the insect's side.

Shao Xuan stepped on the wall with his right foot, and with that strength, he struck down at the connecting part between its head and back like lightning. There was no protection of the back carapace, and no protection of the shield-like shell on the head.

The insect finally realized that something was wrong, seeing that Shao Xuan had the capability to leap over that whirlpool of blades. Its antenna was still back there, and those two forelimbs could not be turned around. In a hurry, it withdrew its antenna to whip on Shao Xuan's back, but it was still a little bit late.

Although it was a sword without a pointed tip, it was as hard and tough as always. The tooth sword was crafted by old Ke himself. Even if there were some minor gaps on its body, it was sharp enough to cut down the insect's neck.

Puff!

The tooth sword cut the insect's neck from top to bottom. In fact, the neck was the most vulnerable and soft part of that insect.

Due to limited length, the tooth sword could only cut down half of its neck, but even so, it was painful enough for the insect to lose all its fighting capability. Even the antenna it withdrew, turned soft and droopy.

Shao Xuan pulled back the knife, and took the chance to strike again. This time, he almost chopped off its whole head.

The waving forelimbs of the insect had no strength any more, and the

withdrawing antenna dropped to the ground, while its half-standing body finally went down.

Shao Xuan moved his numb arm as he tried to catch his breath. He went over and cut off the remaining antenna, as he decided to keep it for himself.

After resting for a while, Shao Xuan intended to leave.

There was a dead insect, and perhaps it would attract other worms and insects to come to the spot. One needed to leave as soon as possible.

Shao Xuan stood in the middle of the tunnel, and now he had three options: continue to go along the path to the left, or the path in the right side, or just retreat to that three-forked crossing again.

Should he go along the path or retreat to the three-forked crossing?

Perhaps, if he went back and chose another path he could have the right path, he could reunite with the hunting group. However, there was a chance that he might still choose the wrong way, where unknown dangers awaited him.

There was no time to lose, and Shao Xuan needed to make a quick decision.

He closed his eyes to think, and then he turned to the left. This time he was not making the decision by the intuition of the flame, instead, he basically shielded the flaming horns totem in his mind. In the meantime, the egg-shaped light ball which covered the totem grew brighter, but the choice was still the one on the left.

With the antenna in his hand, Shao Xuan decided to move forward as he opened his eyes.

# Chapter 58 – The skeletons in the cave

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Sponsored by Nathanael

Perhaps it was because of the existence of the king stone worm, but up to now, the only creature Shao Xuan encountered was the insect which dragged him away earlier. All the rest of the other creatures and worms seemed to have disappeared.

Probably all those eyeless spiders and other worms hid in their dens since the king stone worm woke up and took a walk around.

As for the insect which was just beheaded by Shao Xuan, perhaps it was just too anxious to take revenge.

If that was true, perhaps Shao Xuan should go back to the three-forked crossing and choose a new path?

Never mind. Shao Xuan shook his head, and continued to follow the intuition. It was very strange and weird in this mountain.

Shao Xuan grabbed the antenna that he had chopped off and coiled it around one of his arms. Except for the hook with serrations on the top, the other parts of the antenna were quite soft, and Shao Xuan felt no pain when he coiled it around his arm.

Now, Shao Xuan had no idea which part of the mountain he was in, because

he was very clear that he absolutely had no sense of direction inside, as he spent more and more time in the tunnels. It was quite peculiar, he had quite a strong sense of direction, but it didn't work in here.

In fact, Shao Xuan loved to play maze games in his former life, and he could memorize every place he had been to. When the others were having a headache about the messed-up directions, Shao Xuan could always find the right one correctly. Even now, if he needed to get back to the tribe along the hunting route, he wouldn't have the slightest hesitation, however, in this mountain, he was confused.

There were many tunnels and creatures in the mountain. Aside from the king stone worm, there were also many other kinds of creatures, the eyeless spiders and the insect killed by Shao Xuan were only two of the many kinds.

In theory, there should be traces of many different creatures living together. Unfortunately, none of those traces could be found. There were no scratches, no remains, no cobwebs, no pieces of shells, nothing, as if nothing ever existed. Just like when hunting groups created some marks to show the right route, it would be totally erased by the time someone came in again.

If the totem's power really could guide those who lost their way to the right direction and path, how could their ancestors then have been lost in the mountain?

Shao Xuan kept walking forward following this feeling. When there was a crossing or a fork, he would carefully sense the surroundings with this special ability to choose which way to go. Shao Xuan only hoped that his intuition doesn't go wrong or lie to him, else he would be doomed. Just as the ancestors in Lang Ga's stories, he won't be able to come back once he lost his way in here.

Compared with the intuition brought by the flame, Shao Xuan had a stronger feeling when he used his special ability.

He felt that he was moving down, and probably, he had left the mountain side long ago and he almost reached the foot of the mountain. However, his intuition told him to keep walking.

Later on, he saw some small worms which were the same size as an adult's fist. In his vision, they were just balls of pale grey, and the vague rough outlines

were the only thing that Shao Xuan could see with his special ability.

When the worms approached Shao Xuan, he would use the antenna to whip them away. In fact, those little worms seemed to be quite afraid of the smell of that antenna. When Shao Xuan whipped them with the antenna, they tended to run away promptly, quite frightened.

Shao Xuan speculated that perhaps those little worms were the food that the insect usually ate, which should be a reasonable explanation for their panicked behavior.

Along with the antenna whip, the tooth sword also held the essence of the insect.

Fist-sized worms were crawling all over the wall, and Shao Xuan could even hear the faint but numerous sounds as they wriggled on the wall.

But wherever Shao Xuan went, those worms would keep away from him.

If he had not killed that insect and chopped down its antenna, wouldn't it have been troublesome for him now? Even though the worms were not big in size, in large quantities, they could be pretty difficult to deal with.

At first, Shao Xuan only cut off that antenna for revenge, however, unexpectedly, it was quite useful in this situation.

The unique feeling was gradually getting intenser. If we say that earlier, his feeling was like a little breeze, now it could be considered as a gust of strong wind, indicating the right direction.

It shouldn't be the way out, but both the totemic power and that special ability told him to go along the same way.

Why was that exactly?

Some kind of a treasure?

Even with a clear indication, Shao Xuan didn't proceed faster, but kept to the same pace, while being alert of the surroundings.

Luckily, aside from those little worms, there was no other creature.

It was closer...

Shao Xuan clenched his tooth sword and was a little bit tense.

After walking in the cave for so long, Shao Xuan could always feel the breeze and slight sounds. However, the more he moved forward, the more he felt that he was heading to a dead end.

Shao Xuan continued to walk along the way, and soon enough, there were no more worms on the wall.

It was very quiet around here, and when all the sounds of the worms faded away, it was complete silence.

It was not only the silence, there wasn't even air-flow in the surroundings.

There seemed to be light, in the front...

Shao Xuan hesitated.

Light?

Shao Xuan switched to the normal view, it was still dark. He realized that he could only see the light spot in the darkness when he used his special ability to switch to the special view.

Shao Xuan went towards that light spot, and all of a sudden, he felt kind of suffocated in his heart.

He could not tell what exactly that feeling was... It was like something ancient, desolate and with endless sadness.

The light spot grew bigger and now it seemed like a light cover, shrouding that small piece of land.

When Shao Xuan finally reached the spot and was able to see the situation inside the light cover clearly, one of his eyelids twitched suddenly.

Inside the light cover there were four skeletons, at least it was so in Shao Xuan's view.

In the middle of the cover, there was a skeleton on its knees, and the other three were surrounding him.

The four skeletons were genuflected in the same gesture, which was also the

most respectful salute in the ritual in the tribe, on their knees, with two hands crossed before the forehead, and kowtowed in the same direction.

Around those four skeletons, there were long spears and stone knives buried underneath the ground. Those stone weapons were all in a very dark color, especially the long spear beside the man in the middle, which was almost black. Obviously they were all excellent stone tools, which can only mean that all four warriors used to be strong and powerful ones in the tribe, especially the one in the middle. He must have had quite a high position.

And the direction in which they were worshiping... Even though Shao Xuan had a confused sense of direction, he had a feeling that it was the tribe.

Shao Xuan glanced over those four skeletons and their stoneware, and then his sight focused on the skeleton in the middle.

There was a bone ornament in front of his chest. Shao Xuan did not know what kind of bone it was made from, but it had a brighter color than any of the skeletons in Shao Xuan's special view.

Ever since he had obtained that special capability, Shao Xuan had given serious thought and done much research about the special view. In his special view, different warriors of different level had bones of different colors. For instance, junior warriors had pale gray skeletons, while intermediate warriors had white skeletons. For senior warriors, such as the Chief Ao, he had bright white skeletons. However, right now, all those four skeletons were in the color of bright white. Although they were in different shades, it was true that they were all quite advanced warriors. Among them, the one in the middle had the brightest color. But even so, these four skeletons could never be compared with the bone ornament.

But that wasn't the most important thing he had observed.

The thing that caught Shao Xuan's undivided attention was a ball beset in the bone ornament. It was no bone, but it lit up the surroundings like a light bulb, which created the light cover that Shao Xuan saw earlier.

Once again, he switched the view and withdrew his special ability. This time he tried to look at it with the normal view, only to find that it was still nothing but darkness, with no trace of light. However, when he used his special ability

to see, he noticed that the ball was as bright as always, and the light it created enveloped the surroundings into its cover.

With a little more observation, Shao Xuan also found that unlike the other three skeletons, the skeleton in the middle was the most complete one in good condition. The others had sunk into the ground to some extent. The things that were located closer to the edge of the light cover sank deeper into the ground.

In the range of the light cover, some scattered stoneware could also be seen. They were all made out of fine stones, but some of them had already submerged under the ground with only parts of them still above to be seen.

However, outside the range of the light cover, Shao Xuan had not seen any stoneware, skeletons, or bones.

This mountain was 'eating' people. Not only people, it was "eating" other things as well. If the insect killed by Shao Xuan wasn't eaten by other creatures, it's remains probably would also be swallowed by the mountain gradually.

In fact, this mountain had "eaten" a lot, for instance, the long-lost humans, dead worms or insects, and other things in here. Aside from those caves and tunnels, nothing had been left.

However, even after hundreds of years, the warriors and stoneware in the range of that light cover could be preserved up to today, because of the lighting ball.



# Chapter 59 – Getting out of the mountain

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Surely the man in the middle was one of the ancestors in the tribe, and it was highly likely that he was one of the members of the first batch of warriors who contributed in establishing the hunting route. This skeleton was so strong that it might even be stronger than the Chief Ao. However, Shao Xuan had not heard about him from Lang Ga.

Shao Xuan wasn't sure who the other three skeletons were. Perhaps they were also part of the first batch of warriors like the one in the middle, or they might also be from a later generation and got lost in the tunnels.

Whether it was right or wrong, Shao Xuan felt a little baffled seeing the four skeletons here.

So, the direction that the totem led, the so-called intuition, all meant here?

Why did he feel that the ancestors were entrapping their descendants?

The warrior in the middle should be the first skeleton here, while the other three could be with him, or just followed their intuition and came here.

Could those lost ones have found this place following the "intuition" of the totem, and then waited for their death in here?

No, that shouldn't be the case.

Maybe those people knew it was impossible for them to get out, or they had tried a thousand times but failed in the end, so they came back to this place and decided to stay in the "circle of protection". Even after hundreds of years, their bodies were not 'swallowed' by the mountain.

Shao Xuan had a tingling sensation, thinking that even the oldest batch of warriors with a strong capability did not manage to flee from this place, how could he survive as a junior warrior?

Shao Xuan stepped forward and entered the range protected by that light cover, and immediately felt a sense of warmth, which eased his tensed nerves a little bit. But that was all.

Shao Xuan reached out his hand to the nearest skeleton, and he touched a mummified hand. It was not bones, but air-dried flesh. Even though the warrior was long gone, he could still feel the strength inside the remains.

There was no ugly smell, and Shao Xuan thought, perhaps the stench of death was assimilated by the tunnel.

Shao Xuan also touched the other two warriors in the circle. Like the first one, they were also mummified.

But when he touched the one in the middle, he surprisingly found that this one was only a little bit dry, and his body was in much better condition than the others!

So it was all due to the light ball's effect.

The light created by the ball could not only protect the things inside from being swallowed by the mountain, but also preserve the remains. Even other creatures living in the mountain would not approach and feast on the bodies.

This must be a treasure of the tribe! Of course, only warriors of high status would be able to have it.

However, now it was not the time for that.

What should he do?

Will he be the fifth corpse kneeling here with them?

Shao Xuan sat on the ground, pretty upset.

Did the others in the tribe know about the totem's trap?!!

As he was cursing in his mind, Shao Xuan suddenly felt a flame somersault in his mind.

Shao Xuan hesitated, and quickly he calmed down and began to stimulate the totemic power in his body.

This time, it was yet another intuition, telling him that he was able to get out.

An idea flashed in his mind and Shao Xuan jumped up out of excitement when he captured the thought. After pacing back and forth for a bit, Shao Xuan stimulated the other power inside him, and used it to confirm that intuition.

You can walk out...

Can!

Perhaps he should trust the totem for yet another time?

Well, that was the only option, and he had to trust it anyway.

Shao Xuan took a step.

With just one step, the totemic flame in his mind flared, and it flared again as he took another second step.

Unlike when he used his totemic power during the hunt, this time the flame flared up, acting as if it was angry.

Shao Xuan stopped, and looked back at those four skeletons kneeling down within the light cover. Did they have any resentment when they died? After all, they were trapped in here, till death.

For people in the tribe, every time when there's trouble, they would perform a divination to ask their ancestors, and interpret their guidance through the totemic power and flames. However, the ancestors, the totemic power and the flame, all couldn't help them to find a way out.

However, when Shao Xuan took another close look at those four skeletons, he found that they were so devout in the gesture, lacking any sort of resentment. It was the highest standard of worship, facing the direction of the tribe...

Shao Xuan took a step back, and the totemic flame did not flare up. It was quite calm.

Yet one step further away from the skeletons, the totemic flame flared up

again.

Then one step back, the flame became calm again.

There were quite a few things that Shao Xuan was not able to understand. After all he was not the same as the indigenous people here. But the more time he spent here, the deeper he understood about the fact, that this world was filled with all kinds of mysterious powers, in which you had no other choice, but to believe in.

Shao Xuan stared at the skeletons kneeling inside the circle. Were they expecting him to take them back?

It was a pity that they had been kneeling here for hundreds of years...

Shao Xuan sighed deeply.

After thinking for a while, he kneeled down on one knee with two palms crossed before his forehead, and made four salutes towards these four ancestors, just as when he did during the ritual ceremony.

Shao Xuan walked towards them and pulled out his knife, to dig out the bones which had sunk in the ground.

Originally he was just taking a chance, but unexpectedly he managed to dig the bones out. And judging by the appearance of the bones, they were well preserved.

So Shao Xuan patiently dug out all the bones and all the stoneware that was buried underneath.

He tossed all the small pieces of stoneware inside his animal skin bag, and tied all the big pieces together with a leather rope he carried with him. Those were fine stones, and it would be a big waste just to leave them in here.

As for the four skeletons...no, those four mummies. Shao Xuan used that long antenna of that insect to tie them together.

"I sincerely apologize for this discourtesy from the bottom of my heart!" Shao Xuan whispered.

After he finished doing all that, he carried all the things and the ancestors on his back.

Well, that was heavy!

Unexpectedly, even though the ancestors were all mummified, they were still heavier than stones.

With those four mummies on his back, and all stoneware at hand, Shao Xuan felt that he was like a moving light bulb. The light it created drove away all creatures, it certainly helped Shao Xuan to avoid those insects and worms.

Before Shao Xuan got near to the swarm of small worms, the worms hurriedly diverged and ran away, as if they had encountered something disgusting. Shao Xuan did not even have to whip them away.

Still, he followed his intuition. This time, the intuition was indicating a different way. Not only that, Shao Xuan felt that he was walking through other tunnels, instead of heading to the mountain side.

There was no creature that dared to block his way. Also, those eyeless spiders that he met half way, all fled before Shao Xuan approached them.

Wow, why couldn't the ancestors manage to find a way out with such a treasure at hand?

So, were they still just lost in the end? And since they could neither defeat the king stone worm, nor split the mountain directly, they were trapped and died inside.

Shao Xuan took two breaks during the journey, and used the breaks to eat some of the meat jerky he had brought. It was quite tiring and he needed to refuel the energy before continuing on the march.

He did not know for how long he had been walking. It could've been a few hours or dozens of hours. Shao Xuan's head was totally messed up, for in here it was impossible for him to calculate the time attentively. The only thing he could do now was follow his intuition.

Finally, Shao Xuan smelled the air of the forest.

After spending so much time in a place filled with the smell of stones, Shao Xuan was delirious with joy because of the fresh air

There's wind.

The wind came from the path ahead!

Shao Xuan sped up and switched his sight to the normal view. He found that light spot!

It was the light from the outside!

He was getting out of the mountain!

He managed to get out of the mountain!

However, since totemic power could really lead the way, why were the ancestors of the tribe ultimately trapped to death inside the mountain? and could only worship at the direction of the tribe? Even if he ignored the ancestors, why couldn't the warriors in the tribe now walk into the mountain if they weren't familiar with the paths yet?

Shao Xuan had no answer for that, and probably the only thing he could think of about his difference with others, was the special ability that he had...

# Chapter 60 – Don't get so worked up! Let's talk like adults!

---

Translated by Sunyancai

The others in the hunting group were still waiting by the exit of the cave until the next day in the afternoon.

Originally they were to leave at noon, but Mai and Lang Ga suggested to wait a little longer, which was the only reason why all the warriors were staying by the cave.

In fact, Lang Ga and the others had already completely lost hope by that time, but still, they were not willing to admit it.

“Let's go, or else we won't be able to make it in time.” Another warrior of Mai's age proposed as he looked up at the sky.

They did not bring much food, for they had stored all the game they had hunted in the first location. Since they were trekking towards the second location, they only brought moderate amount of food. Now, some of the warriors already had an empty food bag.

According to tradition, in the hunting group, nobody shall leave when waiting for a comrade. Even running out of food, no warrior shall go for hunting. That was in fact a memorial service in disguise. Although their comrade might be gone forever without any remains, others should wait to pay their respect in some way. Rationally speaking, all of them knew that whoever had gone lost would never return.

Once they left the cave, it meant that they gave up on waiting, which was also

considered-the end of the mourning and the beginning of the hunt. It was a different nature of act, for they won't return to the cave unless the hunting was over.

Most warriors in the hunting group thought that it was already enough for them to have waited for so long. Shao Xuan was no big guy, and neither did he have any important status in the tribe. So there was no need for them to spend days in mourning. They had to start the hunt soon.

Mai looked at the sinking sun and told everybody that they should prepare to go.

Before leaving, everybody lowered their heads and pointed at the middle of their eyebrows with their index fingers. Every time when someone was lost, the others would pay their respect in that simple way.

"Let's go". Mai led the others to leave the cave after the mourning. They were heading to another cave in the mountainside, which was their second stronghold.

...

Step by step, Shao Xuan walked towards the exit of the cave, with the ancestors on his back and stoneware, in his bags.

After spending so much time in the darkness, Shao Xuan did not feel uncomfortable seeing the light again.

Shao Xuan was able to hear the sounds of insects and birds outside, and he was in quite a good mood.

The exit of the cave was much narrower than the entrance at the mountainside. Perhaps it was as big as other entrances and exits a long time ago, but now it was half blocked by the falling stones, and the rest of it became covered by vines and leaves by the passing of time .

The mountain was not different from any other mountains on the surface, and there was also grass, bushes, trees, pools and brooks. It was only in the inside of the mountain that was different from other mountains. So on the surface, all the plants and animals were similar, and the list of all the names of hunting group leaders in generations were still carved on the wall near the



entrance, and that wouldn't be erased at all.

By the exit of the cave, Shao Xuan stood still and listened closely to the sounds outside. He observed the surroundings through the vines, and made sure that no dangerous creature was there. So carefully, he pushed aside those vines and stepped out. When exiting, he paid extra attention to those mummified people on his back, because they were fragile.

Feeling the not-so-bright sunshine, Shao Xuan felt like he was somehow reborn. If he was in a safe environment, he would probably shout it out to express his euphoria.

Earlier he was already used to seeing those skeletons, and in fact, Shao Xuan was not afraid of them. However, now during the daylight, he looked back and only found four mummies...Shao Xuan calmed himself down, and began to hypnotize himself: it's fine...they are the ancestors, ancestors of the tribe... even if they are mummified, dried, and darkened, they are as brave and extraordinary as always...

He did not untie those four "people" immediately. The treasure was still effective, and Shao Xuan wanted to shelter himself under the blessing of the ancestors before he could rejoin the hunting group.

Shao Xuan didn't know where he was standing but looking up, he could still see those flying figures in the sky, so he figured that perhaps he was still at the same mountain. It was not the mountainside, but the mountain foot, and, he felt that it was already the other side of the mountain.

It was impossible for him to run around in the unknown environment without a plan. He was not capable of dealing with the ferocious beast by himself. At the same time, Shao Xuan had to be prepared not to be grabbed by those big birds flying in the sky. So he could only try to make contact with the hunting group first.

Looking down at the body, Shao Xuan found a layer of gray stone powder all over his animal skin clothes, as well as on his hands.

He rubbed his hands together to dust off those stone powder. Originally he intended to grab some leaves from the vines to wipe his hands, but on second thought, he gave up on the idea, for he didn't know whether it was poisonous

or not.

After rubbing his hands, Shao Xuan curled two of his fingers and put them into his mouth. Right after that, a rhythmic whistling sound came out.

Yelling was absolutely forbidden here, for that loud noise might draw the attention of some creatures. Hence Shao Xuan used the old way of the hunting team, which was the whistle. As he was blowing the whistle, he decided to make a deer whistle for later use when he returns to the tribe.

Warriors in the hunting group who were heading to the second stronghold hesitated at the sound, especially Qiao, Mai and the other few intermediate totemic warriors. Their hearing was a little better than junior warriors. When others could only hear a vague sound, they could hear it clearly in their ears.

“Mai! That is...” Qiao pulled on Mai’s arm excitedly.

Mai hinted her to calm down, and listened to the distant sound carefully. It was distant, but still, Mai figured that it was a signal of the hunting team. Also, it seemed that only Ah-Xuan could blow the whistle in that way!

However, they had just left the exit of the cave, and the whistle was obviously not from the cave, but down the mountain...

“You wait here for a moment!” Mai said and in a hurry, he rushed down the mountain. After only a few leaps, his figure disappeared in the forest.

“Is it really Ah-Xuan?” Lang Ga was thrilled as well as stunned. Although he could not hear it clearly, it was not his first time hearing that whistle. When he found those two kids after the Thorn Black Wind, he was following that similar whistle.

“Not possible. How could Ah-Xuan come out, while all our ancestors were lost inside?!” a warrior said. He wasn’t wishing Ah-Xuan not to come back, it was just his respect and worship towards the ancestors that stopped him from believing in Shao Xuan’s capability.

“But the sound was exactly the same as the one that we heard when we found him the last time!” Ang said.

Lang Ga could hardly restrain himself thinking that Ah-Xuan was still alive.

Not only Lang Ga, the others wanted to know the answer as badly as him.

“Let’s go and see!”

“Yeah, let’s go. As long as we are still in the mountain, we won’t encounter any large-sized ferocious beasts. We can go to the cave later.”

“I want to go, too!”

Normally, warriors in the hunting group always followed the leader’s command and they respected the rules. When the leader asked to wait, they would just wait. However, it wasn’t normal circumstances now. Ever since the hunting route was established, almost nobody had succeeded in finding a way out after getting lost inside! Even the ancestors could not manage to do that!

The few intermediate totemic warriors discussed for a moment and they all chose to go and see.

So, after Mai rushed towards that direction, the others in the hunting group followed his footsteps.

Mai followed the sound and arrived at the mountain foot, only to find someone covered in gray standing there.

At first, Mai paid no attention to the things Shao Xuan was carrying, nor the stoneware laid besides his feet, for he was totally stunned.

Although covered in a layer of gray stone powder, Shao Xuan was merely a kid, and one could easily recognize him by his size.

“You are all right, Ah-Xuan!” The others in the hunting group soon followed Mai here and all of them recognized Shao Xuan as well.

Lang Ga approached him quickly and planned to give him a warrior’s hug to celebrate his survival. But after he saw what was on his back, Lang Ga stammered, “Ah-Xuan...what...what is...on your back...?”

All the attention was fixed on Shao Xuan’s back.

“Well, this.” Shao Xuan turned so that the other could have a clearer picture of the people he was carrying. He pointed at them and said, “They are the

ancestors.”

However, Shao Xuan indeed underestimated the weight of the word “ancestor” in people’s hearts.

Once the word “ancestor” was spoken out loud, Shao Xuan found that all the warriors in the hunting group seemed to be frozen. They just stood still, but all the eyes turned red, and their breaths turned heavy. Their faces began to convulse, which was a little twisted. What’s more, almost all of their bodies began to shake.

A second earlier they were quite normal, but now, they weren’t themselves!

“Wait a second! Don’t get so worked up and let’s talk like adults!”

# Chapter 61 – Die without regrets

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Do not get so worked up?

How's that even possible!

Talk like adults?

How could they talk? They were totally speechless!

It is the ancestors, the ancestors of the tribe!!

The others had no doubt about Shao Xuan's claim, for they all knew that for generations, only people from the Flaming Horn tribe lived in this area. So, whoever was lost in the mountain, should be their ancestors. It was highly likely they were their ancestors!

Thinking that Shao Xuan was carrying the ancestors on his back, the crowd had an intense emotion filling up their chests.

They believed in the totem, and worshiped their ancestors. For people in the tribe, the totem was sacred for sure, and the word "ancestor" had its own halo.

The others in the tribe were standing still with only their lips trembling. Now, finally they started to move.

At first it was only baby steps towards Shao Xuan. They could effortlessly leap and run during normal hunting missions, but right now, it seemed that just one baby step exhausted all their strength.

Gradually, the paces became quicker, but they still were baby steps, as if they would wake up their ancestors if they took a big step, and they had to be as

careful as possible.

Looking at almost three dozen hunting warriors approaching him, Shao Xuan suddenly wanted to run away. He felt that their facial expressions were much too creepy than what he could bear.

When they were only about three steps away from Shao Xuan, Mai in the front of the crowd took the lead and kneeled down in front of Shao Xuan with one knee! The others all followed Mai and made a serious salute towards him. It was the salute they made to the ancestors.

Although unlike the highest salute on bended knees, they were kneeling down on only one knee, the sound of the knees hitting on the ground was loud and clear. Shao Xuan could almost feel the pain by listening to that sound. What's more, except for Mao, all those warriors were either a lot older than him, or much higher in status than him in the tribe. They were all kneeling down in front of him!

Shao Xuan was speechless.

Fuck my life! Won't this shorten my life? Shao Xuan felt a thousand Caesars howling in his heart.

Thinking about that, Shao Xuan couldn't help but try to move aside for a little bit.

"Don't move!" Mai and the others almost shouted out at the same time, to stop Shao Xuan's attempt.

Shao Xuan was stunned and he stopped.

Seeing people like that, Shao Xuan really did not know what to do. He was rigid with shock for a while, with only one feeling, that the four ancestors were as heavy as steel. And the weight made him sweat a lot.

When the others had finished with the salute, Shao Xuan saw them carefully coming closer to him, trembling they untied those four ancestors from his back, with the highest respect on their faces.

Seeing Shao Xuan having tied those four ancestors like that, people felt that Shao Xuan was disrespectful towards the ancestors. With a closer look, they

found that he used the antenna of that hateful insect in the mountain as the rope!

Shao Xuan sat aside, resting, but during which time he was glared at over and over by condemning eyes. However, he had thick skin, so he just sat there as if nothing happened. He wasn't stupid enough to offer explanation to those fanatical people about anything. Apparently they were all soaked in extreme emotions, and no one could reason with them right now.

However, even when there was nothing to explain, Shao Xuan didn't want to be glared at like that. So he diverted the others attention by telling them what happened in the cave briefly.

Earlier, all of them were curious about how Shao Xuan got out from the cave, but their attention was caught by the ancestors and no one had any interest in other things. Now since Shao Xuan was willing to speak, all the others paid attention to his tale of survival.

Of course Shao Xuan wouldn't lay his cards open on the table, so he simply narrated the story of how he killed that insect, and encountered the king stone worm. He also made it clear that he hadn't seen the king stone worm for real, but only experienced the change of environment. Then, he thought about the Shaman's lecture. Then, under the guidance of the totem, he found those ancestors.

Although he didn't mention the light cover, he shared his speculation with the others, in order to make it clear that those three mummies, no, three ancestors should better be placed together with the one who had the mysterious bone ornament.

"I think the bone ornament worn by this ancestor must have special power, that could protect the other ancestors." Shao Xuan disclosed his 'speculation'.

The others thought it over and all agreed. They felt comfortable when they came closer to that ancestor, no wonder they were ancestors!

Even if the mysterious bone ornament was a precious treasure, no one in the hunting group had thought about keeping it for himself. That was the

advantage of being fanatical. No one would forget honor at the prospect of profits, and of course no one would forget about the ancestors, or the rules in the tribe.

So, after having separated those four ancestors at first, they “respectfully” gathered them back together.

When Shao Xuan was describing the scene when he found the four ancestors, all the others were shedding tears, feeling that they were the witnesses of that picture of desolation. The ancestors were still thinking about the tribe until their last breath. In order to establish a new hunting route for later generations, they died an honorable death and were trapped in that dark cave for a thousand years. All warriors felt sad for the ancestors and they were crying heavily. Lang Ga and the other young warriors were lamenting violently as they cried out loud.

Why didn't he notice before that they were so emotional? The scene in front of him almost made Shao Xuan collapse. He tried very hard to keep his expression straight, and prevented his face from twitching. In the past, he only knew that people in the tribe worshiped heroes and the Chief a lot. But now, he realized that the reverence earlier could never be compared with the reverence they held towards the ancestors.

The four ancestors had been dead for many years, and for all those years, they had been in the same position of kneeling down on both their knees in the direction of the tribe. So, the warriors in the hunting group were very careful when moving the ancestors. Also, they tried their best to let them kneel down facing the direction of the tribe.

There were only four bodies, and there were over thirty hunting warriors. Usually, they would fight fiercely against those ferocious beasts, and some of them could knock down a bear with only one single punch. But now, they were all sweating like hell for being very meticulous and reverent. Before every move, they had to think it over and over again. So dealing with the ancestors was physically and mentally straining. However, everyone behaved like they enjoyed it very much with honor.

As Shao Xuan predicted, in the heart of the others in this hunting group, those



four bodies were very sacred. Although they were dried and hardened, without their original appearances, they were still the ancestors. To be honest, their horrible shapes even made Shao Xuan think twice before he carried them out. But those terrifying faces and bodies had their own special aura. All the warriors wanted to do another salute after they stood up.

Finally, before dusk, they managed to carry the ancestors to the cave of the second location. If in normal days, it would take far less time to march from the mountain foot to the second location. However, this time, with the four ancestors, they spent nearly two hours on the same distance!

When they arrived at the cave, and set those ancestors right in their places, all of the warriors did yet another salute. Some of them even talked about the ancestors in their sleep.

Now that this had happened, those hunting warriors had less interest in hunting. Their first wish was to bring the ancestors back to the tribe, so that they could finally return home after hundreds of years of desolation. Surely the ancestors were waiting for that day as well.

However, rules were rules. Nobody had set any rules for when one found an ancestor, for the hunting group to go back early. Hunting rules were passed along in generations by the ancestors, so they dared not to disrespect them. According to the hunting schedule, they had to keep hunting for about another ten days, before they could rejoin the other hunting groups, and then get back to the tribe together.

Even though the rules couldn't be broken, people could still alter the minor details. Mai could decide what to do every day.

Originally, the hunting region was pretty large and warriors would go on expeditions after they arrived at the second location. Sometimes they would even spend a few nights outside the cave. However, now, Mai told all of them to hunt around the nearby areas, and for warriors to take turns to stay in the cave to guard it. With the Thorn Black Wind's attack earlier, people were worried that some other ferocious beasts might break into the cave and hence damage the remains of the ancestors. Even though ferocious beasts were barely seen in this mountain, people had to stay alert about the smaller ones, and

other unforeseen accidents that might happen.

All of them agreed on Mai's suggestion and they took turns in guarding the cave.

Days passed.

The hunting life was adventurous, and Shao Xuan had hunted down some really nice preys, under the guidance of the senior hunting warriors. It should be enough for him to live on for almost a month.

When there were five days left before the reunion day, Mai decided to lead the group back. With the ancestors, they had to be more cautious than ever, so it would definitely take longer for them to go back. So in order to meet with the other groups in time, they had to start early.

This time, it was very smooth when going through those tunnels in the mountain. No one was left behind.

Warriors in the hunting group cut down fine timbers, and made a palanquin to carry the ancestors. In Shao Xuan's eyes, it was simply-built, but was enough to use it to take the ancestors home.

They knew it at heart, that when they got back to the tribe from hunting this time, their game must be the least among all the groups. But they did not care at all!

They had three Thorn Black Winds stored in the first stronghold!

Not to mention that the most important thing was that they had found four ancestors, which was even beyond honorable! Guarding the ancestors and taking them back home probably would be the most glorious thing in their whole lives!

They felt that now they could die without regrets! Die without regrets!

# Chapter 62 – Returning home

---

Translated by Sunyancai

The tribe woke up early in the morning as usual. It was silent initially, and then got noisy gradually. Looking calm and peaceful.

Ge yawned as he walked out of his door. It was yet another boring day, and he planned to go to the riverside to check on the kids fishing there.

He stretched his body while walking, but all of a sudden, he heard something, and looked towards the direction of the sound.

It came from the people, living near the Path of Glory.

And if you counted the time, you would realize that it was about time for the hunting team to return. These days, the other hunting team was already preparing to set off.

When Ge looked along those few people's sights, and found that on the Path of Glory, two warriors were running up the mountain carrying a man. It seemed that the wounded man was unconscious, and those two warriors carrying him were quite anxious.

Was he badly wounded? Was it so severe that he could die any minute?

The man carried to the top was not a child but an adult, which relieved Ge, a little bit. During the days when the hunting team was supposed to return, old Ke was in a condition of anxiety almost always. He had not been sleeping well for a long time, and even when old Ke was wearing his stiff poker face, the others could tell from that frozen expression that old Ke was not in a good mental state.

“Well, is it that bad?” Ge slightly snapped.

或者明天便会回来了。

Since people sent the wounded warrior to the tribe, perhaps the main team would return this afternoon or early tomorrow.

Originally, Ge planned to drop by at old Ke’s place and tell him the news, but on second thought, Ge decided to wait a little longer, to see if there were any more wounded warriors or any unprecedented events first. Many people shared Ge’s thoughts, so those who had nothing particular to do just waited along the Path of Glory for the day.

Soon after, Ge and the others in the mountain foot district heard a noise, and the noise came from the mountaintop!

All of them looked up, only to find that a few people were rushing down from the mountaintop along the Path of Glory. To their surprise, one of them was the Shaman!

In the past when a hunting team returned, the Shaman would wait at the end of the Path of Glory, which was located at the top, to welcome them back. However, now the Shaman came down in a hurry. Two warriors guarded the Shaman on both sides, a bit afraid that he might trip or something. It seemed that if the Shaman wasn’t so old, he would have run down like a gust of wind.

When the Shaman passed the crowd along the Path of Glory, Ge and the others could see the expression on the Shaman’s face clearly. He was always calm and unperturbed usually, but now, he was quite anxious. It seemed that he was about to cry.

What the hell happened?!

Everyone who witnessed the scene was thinking the same question. No matter what had happened, it must be big, or else the Shaman wouldn’t act this way.

Thinking about something big was happening or had happened, everyone became anxious.

Ge hurried towards old Ke’s place.

Suffering from severe insomnia, old Ke had bags under his eyes. For the past few days, he had been sitting in the room as usual, since early in the morning to do some stone crafting. The only difference was that he was totally absent-minded. In fact, he knew at heart that it was impossible for him to craft any fine stoneware given his condition. But he wanted to keep himself occupied, or else he wouldn't be able to persuade himself not to wait along the Path of Glory, or wait outside the tribe.

How anxiously he waited!

Caesar was lying beside his in low spirits as well. His fur had become dim and dark. He was lying on his sides, with a bone in his mouth. When he was bored, he would chew on the bone lazily.

All of a sudden, Caesar moved his ears and stood up, with his eyes looking at the window.

"Old Ke!"

Ge's voice came in from the window, and it was filled with anxiety.

Old Ke was stunned as he was polishing a piece of stoneware roughly. Unconsciously, he pressed down on the half-polished stoneware and broke it into two pieces.

The next moment, Ge went inside through the window. Knowing that old Ke had no time nor interest in setting traps on the window, Ge was much bolder and he wasn't as timid when going in through the window as he used to be.

"What's wrong?" old Ke started the conversation this time.

"I don't know, but something big happened!" Ge told old Ke what he just saw earlier.

Even though he was quite experienced in hunting, old Ke couldn't figure out why the Shaman acted that way. He had no intention in stone crafting anymore, so he grabbed his cane and left his house. Maybe Caesar also sensed that perhaps the hunting team was about to return, he didn't stay but went out together with old Ke.

When old Ke and Ge came to the Path of Glory, almost everyone in the mountain foot district was gathered along the path. It was said that many people even went to the perimeters of the tribe, and there were people along the path of glory in mountain side and mountaintop. The Shaman's act earlier was unsettling to the crowd, however they couldn't figure out what had happened.

Soon, someone came back, and the Shaman was still walking in the front. What was different now was that earlier, the Shaman's facial expression showed only anxiety, but now, he was shedding tears.

The Shaman walked down the path and stood at the end of it, looking towards the direction of outside and waiting for the hunting team's return.

The man that went outside to inquire about the situation returned as well. Like the Shaman, his eyes reddened from excitement. When came back, he whispered something to the others briefly.

"What?! The ancestors?!" a man with poor self-control yet out loud, stunned.

Before he finished his sentence, he was punched down to the ground by the others.

"Quiet!!"

Since they knew the reason why the Shaman was so excited, the unsettling feeling of the crowd reduced. Instead, their excitement rose as time went by.

Like how Mai and the others reacted to the news, people in the tribe were totally stunned hearing the news. Only when they heard that the hunting team had arrived, had they recovered from the daze.

The hunting team grew bigger. Even though there were less than two hundred warriors, but with all the game, it seemed pretty spectacular.

However, this time, no one in the tribe paid any attention to the game. Instead, they were staring at the wooden palanquin in the front.

When they returned to the tribe, Mai and the others had torn down the cover of the palanquin, so that everybody could see the four ancestors kneeling on their knees clearly.

In theory, since Shao Xuan was the one who found the four ancestors, he should be the one lifting the palanquin and bathing in the glory. Unfortunately, he was merely a kid, and it required tall and strong warriors to be the bearers. Relatively speaking, Shao Xuan was...far too short, for now.

Warriors in the hunting group felt sorry for Shao Xuan, but in fact, Shao Xuan didn't share the feeling. It wasn't just lifting the palanquin, all the bearers needed to watch the direction. Because no matter where they were, they needed to guarantee that the four ancestors were always kneeling towards the direction of the tribe. So when they were walking with the ancestors on that palanquin, sometimes they had to alter the angle, while sometimes they had to change the direction. So, all of them seemed just like idiots.

"We welcome the ancestors returning with all the respect!" the Shaman shouted out with arms stretching towards the sky. After the shout, he made a standard and sincere salute towards the ancestors.

All the others in the tribe kneeled down out of excitement.

Shao Xuan was barely able to drag the game, and his teeth ached listening to the sound of knees hitting on the ground.

After making a salute, the Shaman stood up and guarded beside the wooden palanquin. He was the Shaman of the tribe, and of course it was his honor and duty to guard the ancestors when they returned home.

The Shaman accompanied the wooden palanquin going up the mountain, but the others kept kneeling down on both knees. Only when the wooden palanquin passed them, did they have the chance to lift their heads and look at the hunting team walking behind.

The hunting team kept a distance of about ten meters with the wooden palanquin. As usual, all the warriors that returned showed their harvest of the game. Compared to the past, Mai's hunting group had much less game, but since they were the ones who found the ancestors, they were the heroes during this hunting mission in the hearts of everyone in the tribe.

Shao Xuan had hunted a lot of game. He carried most of it on his back, but also had a rope in his hand. The other end of the rope was tied on a Thorn Black Wind.

Shao Xuan didn't have enough strength as a kid, so Mao and some other warriors were helping him.

"Wow! That is..." people besides the Path of Glory sighed at his game.

It had ferocious black thorns, and armor-liked hard scales. Even dead, it was like a demon.

It was a Thorn Black Wind!

And there were three of them!

Oh, my goodness, it's unbelievable!! What was even more unbelievable was that there were two kids dragging a Thorn Black Wind at the front!

However, with the shock they had from seeing the ancestors, this time they were less shocked at this situation. They were only told that it was Mai's hunting group that found the ancestors, and they did not have the details.

Mao was a little ashamed. After all, he hadn't contributed much in hunting down that Thorn Black Wind. Before this hunting mission, he wanted to make Shao Xuan yield to him. However, unexpectedly, he was the useless one when there was a real fight.

Shao Xuan looked around and spotted old Ke and Ge, who were standing at the outer circle of the crowd. Caesar was also there, wagging his tail crazily, with pleasure. Shao Xuan smiled at their direction, but deep down inside, he was thinking about how to tell old Ke about the tooth sword later...



# Chapter 63 – Sword Cleansing Ritual

---

Translated by Sunyancai

After they arrived at the end of the Path of Glory, all the warriors of the hunting team put down their game aside, for they had a ceremony to attend before they could call it a successful conclusion of the hunting mission.

The Shaman asked the bearers to place the wooden palanquin down inside the fire pit. Since there was only a small ball of flame in the fire pit, there was enough space for the palanquin.

Those legs of the four bearers almost gave out when they finally put down the palanquin. They were neither afraid nor nervous. In fact, they were too excited. From their perspectives, it was a great honor, and serving as the ancestors bearer was an experience that they could share with their sons, and grandsons in the future.

After carefully laying down the palanquin in the fire pit, those four warriors left, while the Shaman came in to prostrate himself in front of the ancestors.

Shao Xuan had no idea about the status of the ancestors, but judging from the Shaman's behavior, he guessed that the one with the bone ornament was the most important person among those four. The Shaman made a careful salute towards him especially.

After the salute, the Shaman left the fire pit, for he still needed to host the Sword Cleansing ritual for the warriors that had just returned from the hunting mission.

The Shaman commanded some people to help him carry out a long stone trough, filled with gray water. It had a fresh smell, like the plants in the forest,

but Shao Xuan didn't know how it was prepared.

Every leader of a hunting group would take his members to cleanse their weapons. The Sword Cleansing ritual's purpose was to remove the blood's contamination from the sword after a hunting mission, and to take away the ferocious killing spirit which had been brought back from the mountains. By doing so, it could calm down the warriors who were still immersed in the killing and hunting mindset, and ease their minds of the surging killing thoughts.

When you say Sword Cleansing, in fact it not only referred to swords but the stone spears, axes, and other hunting tools also needed be washed.

Naturally, the first batch of warriors to do the cleansing were the main leader and warriors from the advance party. Then other hunting groups would approach.

The stoneware that Shao Xuan found beside the ancestors were turned over to the leaders once their hunting team had assembled, and now all the stoneware was in the hands of the main leader. Indeed, those were made from really fine stones, but it was impossible for Shao Xuan to keep them. The tribe was the tribe, and with so many eyes fixed on him, he would be an idiot to secretly embezzle them. It was a better option to turn over the tools, for he trusted the Shaman and the Chief would certainly reward him according to his effort, and then he should have his part of the fine stones.

In fact, Shao Xuan could be considered as the main contributor to the hunting team, since he had slaughtered a Thorn Black Wind, and found the ancestors to bring them back.

Because of that, when it was Shao Xuan's turn to cleanse the weapons, the Shaman specially arranged his position in front of the stone trough. In general, only the best performer during the hunting mission could get to stand behind the middle part of the stone trough and cleanse his weapons there. It was the position right in front of the Shaman, and on most occasions in the past, the leaders of those hunting groups were the ones in that position. However, this time it was Shao Xuan, but neither Mai nor the others had any problem with that.

Staring at Shao Xuan in front of him, the Shaman looked extremely gentle and

kind.

Since Shao Xuan had such an eye-catching performance during the hunt, and the discovery of ancestors gave a powerful shock to everyone in the tribe, Shao Xuan had almost every warrior's attention when he was walking towards his Sword Cleansing place. When they met the other hunting groups in the forest, he didn't get much attention due to limited time and tight schedule. Now since everyone was home, they decided to take a closer look at the legendary kid, even the Chief and the main leader were staring at him.

When everyone in his hunting group took up their positions behind the stone trough, the Shaman lifted his hands to indicate that warriors might start cleansing their weapons.

Shao Xuan had observed on how others were cleansing their weapons earlier, so now he knew what to do.

Shao Xuan took out all the spearheads and stone swords that he had taken with him, and placed them inside the stone trough carefully one by one. After he had done all that, he thought for a while, before he took out the very last one.

When Shao Xuan pulled out the tooth sword he got from old Ke, he took out the broken sword-point as well.

Among the warriors staring at him, many of them had recognized that sword made out of a ground komodo's tooth. Even if they did not know who it belonged to in the past, they knew the material of the sword. Some elite warriors in the tribe also had similar swords of the same materials, but they all inherited those swords from their elders.

It was such a fine sword made out of a ground komodo's tooth, but it was broken just like that! The user was merely a kid, did he really have the strength to cause that?

What the fuck!

What the hell happened?!

Some warriors were glaring at the broken sword-point and their eyes almost poked out.

Not only the warriors, the Shaman's gentle face also froze. A second later, he thought about the kid pretending to sing the Song of Hunting in the crowd before. He was really not the same as others!

Shao Xuan felt the gazes of people on him but he chose to ignore them. With two hands, he placed the tooth sword into the stone trough, and soaked the sword in the gray liquid.

There was red blood of the Thorn Black Wind and brown liquid of that insect from the cave on the sword, which wasn't completely cleaned away before when Shao Xuan used water to clean it. However, when the Shaman finished with the spell and told them to take out their stoneware, Shao Xuan was surprised to find that there was no mark on the sword anymore, and all the stoneware continued to shine brightly as if they were never brought to a hunting mission.

When the Sword Cleansing ritual was over, all the warriors felt relieved and their minds too seemed to be cleansed.

Considering that Shao Xuan wasn't strong enough, and given that he had hunted a lot of game, the Shaman told Shao Xuan to go back first, and that he would send someone to help deliver the meat to his place later.

Without having to carry the meat by himself, Shao Xuan could save his strength. He didn't worry that someone would be greedy for his share.

At Shao Xuan's departure, Keke carefully poked the main leader of the hunting team, and glimpsed at Shao Xuan's back before he looked up at the main leader.

The main leader looked very serious, but gave a small nod.

Keke got the permission and suddenly had a big smile on his face. He paid no more attention to the game, and asked Tuo to help him take care of his part, while he ran towards Shao Xuan.

The main leader was contemplating, but he felt something and looked up, only to find his father looking at him. Immediately he smiled subserviently at the Chief, unlike his usual behaviour as the main leader of a hunting team.

The Chief frowned, thinking about what his son was up to... He glanced at Mao standing aside. Perhaps it concerned Mao? He knew a little bit about Mao having some problems with Shao Xuan, but he also considered it as a harmless competition within the tribe. According to the tradition, no elders in the tribe should interfere with harmless competitions, let alone that this time Shao Xuan had repeatedly distinguished himself in the tribe, he couldn't be bullied.

As he was about to approach his son about it, the Shaman summoned him. It was something about the ancestors.

Now that it was about the ancestors, naturally the Chief couldn't afford any delay. But before he left with the Shaman, he glared at his son, warning him not to do anything stupid.

The main leader of the hunting team didn't pay any attention to his old man's glare, but continued his contemplation.

Meanwhile, Shao Xuan went down the mountain empty-handed. He didn't take the Path of Glory, or any other crowded places. Instead, he specifically picked those secluded routes to go down the mountain.

At that time, almost all the families were busy greeting the hunting warriors who returned home, or dealing with the food they brought back. On Shao Xuan's way, there were only a few people wandering around.

Shao Xuan was still trying to figure out what he should tell old Ke about the tooth sword, but he suddenly felt something behind so he stopped. Cold glint flashed in his eyes, and without looking at the approaching fist, Shao Xuan crooked his neck and moved his legs. He dodged easily and avoided the sneak attack from behind.

Despite his first attack missing, the man didn't stop and continued attacking Shao Xuan. It was no slower than the first strike, and almost at the same time Shao Xuan avoided the first one, the others followed.

There was no room for Shao Xuan to dodge, so he put up his arms so as to block the fists. His tiny body was forced to step back because of the fierce strength of his opponent. For every step he withdrew, the stones under his feet cracked. The sound it created was like the rumbling of thunder before a storm.

However, the other side still pressed on against him step by step. When Shao Xuan took a step back, his opponent would take a step forward, and for every step he took, he would punch Shao Xuan's arms for one more time. So many strikes allowed Shao Xuan no time to dodge the hits. A moment earlier, the dust was floating up in the air, yet a moment later, it was scattered due to the punches.

The other side was much stronger than Shao Xuan, and his skill was of course higher. Also, with his dense strikes, he basically suppressed Shao Xuan with his strength.

Shao Xuan felt a surge of blood in his throat, and finally, there was a cracking sound coming from his arm. With that sound, Shao Xuan flew back and stumbled backwards after he landed. It took him some effort to remain standing there, and swallow down the blood he had in his mouth.

This time, the other side didn't continue to attack.

When both sides calmed down, the totemic patterns on their bodies faded away.

When he managed to stand still, Shao Xuan breathed heavily. He paid no attention to his broken arm, anyways it was not a severe wound. He fixed his eyes on his opponent – Keke.

Although Keke had no killing intent, and earlier he just went through the Sword Cleansing ritual. But due to his long hunting career, his every act and every move was filled with a ferocious air.

"Good!" Seeing that Shao Xuan could still keep standing there after he suffered so many strikes yet showed no painful expression, Keke was pretty satisfied. Shao Xuan didn't even seem to care about his broken arm.

However, at the voice of "good", Keke was kicked down.

It was Tuo that kicked down Keke, he was checking on the situation under the main leader's command. However, the first scene he saw was Keke breaking that kid's arm.

*What the hell, Keke!*

*The main leader asked you to test him, and that was how you test him?*

*You are at least an adult warrior, with much higher strength than him, why did you bully such a kid by attacking him that way?! To prove that you were good? Aren't you ashamed of yourself?! The Shaman and the Chief would punish us hard if they knew!*

Tuo was furious and he stepped on Keke again, seeing that he was about to get up.

“You are such a tactless moron!”

Tuo retrieved his foot from Keke's back and looked at Shao Xuan with a smile, “He did not mean harm.” Tuo was trying to seem nice.

Shao Xuan looked at his arm which had just cracked and looked up at Tuo again, poker-faced, as if saying: What, he did not mean harm, but he broke my arm?

Tuo had cursed Keke in his heart for a thousand times, but on his face, it was still a smile full of apologies. He searched his animal skin bag, and pulled out a bag of herbs wrapped in tree leaves, “These are fine herbs. Your arm will be okay in a few days if you drink it.”

Shao Xuan still stared at Tuo, poker-faced. When Tuo was feeling creepy from the stare, Shao Xuan looked down at his own animal skin bag.

Tuo immediately knew what Shao Xuan was suggesting. He silently blamed himself for being so careless. Keke had just broken his arm, so how could he receive the herbs from Tuo?

Placing the herbs inside Shao Xuan's animal skin bag, Tuo smiled at Shao Xuan regretfully again, “He's a moron who knows nothing. Please, kindly forgive him, okay? Given that we are in the same hunting team, haha.”

*Fuck your sister!* Shao Xuan thought as he continued staring.

Tuo was too embarrassed to face Shao Xuan's stare, so he went towards Keke, and dragged him away.

Shao Xuan looked at their backs, and wondered why they acted the way they did...

# Chapter 64 – The position of the totem pattern

---

Translated by Sunyancai

When Shao Xuan went down the mountain, he came directly to Old Ke's place instead of going back to his residence.

Caesar had been waiting for Shao Xuan at the door for a long time. Seeing Shao Xuan, he immediately leapt towards him, and greeted him by jumping back and forth like a dog. Seriously speaking, he would be more like a dog if he wagged his tail a little.

"Hey, Ah-Xuan's back!" Ge sat by the window, and lifted the straw curtain as he spoke to Shao Xuan.

"Uncle Ge." Shao Xuan evaded Caesar, so as to prevent him from touching his wounded arm, and walked inside.

Inside the house, Old Ke sat upon the stone stool which he used to craft stoneware, and stared at Shao Xuan. He was smiling, which was rare.

"It's good that you're back...what's wrong with your arm?!"

Of course Shao Xuan's wounded arm was noticed by Old Ke in a single glance. Earlier when he was on the path of glory with the other warriors, he was fine and was carrying lots of game. There was no sign of injuries back then, but why was his arm wounded after the Sword Cleansing Ritual? Upon notice, Old Ke scowled again after that rare smile.

"Let me see." Ge didn't notice it, so he approached Shao Xuan to take a closer look at his arms since Old Ke said that.



“It’s fine. I’ll be okay after a few days.”

Seeing that Old Ke wanted to know the details, Shao Xuan told him about earlier when he encountered Keke and Tuo on his way down the mountain.

At Shao Xuan’s description, Old Ke thought about it for some time, and then asked Shao Xuan to show him his arm.

“Hmm?” Old Ke sniffed his nose, “Is this the herb that Tuo gave you?”

Old Ke took out the bag of herbs in Shao Xuan’s animal skin bag, and closely observed those few herbs inside.

“These are fine herbs.” He passed the bag of herbs to Ge, who was stretching his neck to look at the bag, “Go and decoct them.”

Ge said nothing, but he put the bag beneath his nose and sniffed it. However, there was nothing inside that he was familiar with. He hadn’t used such herbs before. It smelled completely different from the herbs he normally used.

Old Ke asked about the hunting, and Shao Xuan briefly said something about it.

Even though he had omitted a lot, it was still quite an adventure in Old Ke and Ge’s ears. They still saw it as an alarmingly dangerous mission, and neither of them had anticipated that Shao Xuan would encounter so many things during his first hunting trip. His survival was completely under the blessing of the ancestors.

“So it seems that the ground komodo tooth sword helped a lot!” Ge rubbed his hands, and smirked at Shao Xuan, indicating that Shao Xuan should take out the tooth sword so that he could admire it once again.

“Uh...” Shao Xuan began to stammer immediately.

“What? Did you lose it?!” Ge’s heart constricted, and he glimpsed at the thing on Shao Xuan’s waist. It was indeed the leather sheath of the ground komodo tooth sword.

“No, I didn’t lose it, but...” Shao Xuan embarrassedly took out the sword from the leather sheath.

The ground komodo tooth sword was even cleaner than when it was given to

Shao Xuan from Old Ke, for it was freshly cleansed. However, the missing sword-tip was clearer than ever, which could be noticed at first sight.

It was completely unbelievable to Ge, he took over the sword with trembling hands and was more than distressed.

Shao Xuan looked up at Old Ke, only to find that he wasn't as distressed at the sword as Ge, neither was he angry. Instead, he seemed quite gratified.

Old Ke took the sword over from Ge and had a joyful smile on his face.

"Don't worry, I can craft and polish it into a smaller sword, and you can use it during your second hunting trip." Saying that, Old Ke placed the tooth sword on the shelf aside. He decided to take up no other tasks these days and focus on polishing and adjusting the tooth sword.

The sword suffered from serious wear and tear, and there were a lot of small dents. However, Old Ke was quite happy about that, because all those traces proved that Shao Xuan had a very successful hunt, and he had fought against some ferocious beasts. Instead, if the sword Shao Xuan brought back was as good as new with little or no abrasion, he would be a little disappointed and upset, even though he probably wouldn't say anything.

Old Ke drove away Ge, who was still sad over the sword, and he asked Shao Xuan to drink the potion properly decocted from the herbs.

Downing the bowl of potion in his hand, Shao Xuan suddenly felt as if a spring of warmth swept over his entire body, and made a special stop at his wounded arms. Instead of pain, he felt warm and fuzzy. He could even feel the bones growing back together gradually at a pace which wasn't slow.

"Those are the herbs that the Shaman himself mixed especially. Since some of the herbs are really hard to find, so it would only be distributed to a few warriors. It's impossible for everyone to get it." Said Old Ke.

Because of that, whoever could get the herbs must cherish them a lot. Unexpectedly, Tuo gave a whole pack to Shao Xuan! Old Ke was confused. Even though it was Keke who broke Shao Xuan's arm, but honestly speaking, that wasn't considered as a severe injury in the tribe. Those with fine physiques

would recover naturally after a few days.

Ah-Xuan wasn't familiar with Tuo. If they were in the same hunting group, it would make some sense, but...the same hunting group? Old Ke shook his head. Ah-Xuan had only awakened this year, and he took one hunting trip. Technically he was nothing else but a fine new warrior. It was highly unlikely for him to be picked out to that hunting group. After all, it required the team leader's and the other few senior warriors' permission to get into that hunting group.

Since it was hard to figure out, Old Ke decided to let it go, "Even though I have only one leg, I can still avenge you. Just wait to see Keke's arm the next time you see him."

"No need for that." Shao Xuan smile, "I can avenge myself."

"Good! Then I won't interfere." Old Ke seemed to be more satisfied, "Now, display your totem power, Ah-Xuan."

Shao Xuan quickly revealed the totem pattern on his face, as well as on his arms.

Old Ke stared at the totem patterns on his arms, and his eyes were wide open.

Click!

The cane in Old Ke's hand was broken into half, and he had been using that cane for only a year.

...

At the other side, the team leader just finished up with all the formalities at the mountaintop and returned to his own place after the hunting mission, only to find that Tuo and Keke were already waiting for him inside.

"So how was the test?" the main leader Ta asked.

Before Keke could say anything, Tuo reported that Keke had broken Shao Xuan's arm.

Blue veins stood out on Ta's temples, and he glared at Keke hatefully, as if he was about to kick him again, "That was how you tested him?!"

Keke was sitting on the ground with his legs crossed. He scratched his foot and said, “I didn’t attack using full strength...”

“You planned to attack using full strength?! Where’s your integrity, you moron?” Ta brandished his fist at him.

Keke jumped up and within the blink of an eye he got next to the door, as if he was planning to escape once Ta made any move.

“...I was just out of control.” Keke whispered as he scratched his head with the same hand he scratched his foot. He indeed felt a little embarrassed, thinking that he hit a kid after all.

“Since you can’t control yourself, you’d better tag along with other hunting groups next time.” Ta said with a straight face.

“No, no, no...I can explain.” Keke was anxious seeing that he was about to be kicked out from the group, “You told me to test that kid right, boss? I tested. In fact, I was only about to punch him twice, but seeing the totem patterns emerge on his arms, I couldn’t control myself and kept punching...”

“Totem patterns? What’s wrong with the kid’s totem pattern?” Ta stared at Keke with sharp sights.

“Boss, you said that newly-awakened warriors only had totem patterns up to here, right?” Keke placed his finger at his upper arm near the shoulder, “however, that kid’s totem pattern reached...there!”

Keke made a mark on his upper arm, which was about a palm’s away from the shoulder.

“That’s not possible!” Ta and Tuo shouted out at the same time.

But...

Impossible?

Nothing’s impossible...

In the past, people said that children from the orphan cave wouldn’t be able to be awakened until they turned twelve or thirteen...but now?

In the past, people thought that junior totem warrior couldn’t even slaughter

or fight against adult healthy Thorn Black Wind even when there were only one or two of them. However, ...

In the past, people assumed that no one could get out of that mountain once lost, but in the end?

The kid hadn't been awakened for long!

"Hey, boss. I remembered that Mao's totem pattern was only up there..."

Before Keke could finish his sentence, he got kicked on the leg by Tuo already.

"Fine, you guys go back now." Ta waved his hand, indicating that they should leave for now.

Tuo and Keke pushed each other out of the door, but as they stepped out, they realized that the Chief was standing right outside.

"Ah...Ha-ha...Good day, Chief!"

In a hurry, Tuo and Keke hurried out after a quick salute.

# Chapter 65 – The Elder

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan only took Caesar back to his cabin after having dinner at Old Ke's place.

Although he had been away for over twenty days, it was obvious that someone had helped keep his room clean. There was clean water filled in the crock. It was still fresh, so Shao Xuan figured it must have been poured in recently. Also, the animal skin on the bed had been washed and air-dried, for it had no bugs or stale smell on it.

Apparently, Old Ke had asked someone to do all that.

Shao Xuan moved his arm a little after he lit bonfire.

It had only been three hours, and Shao Xuan could feel that his bones were healing quickly. Indeed, those were fine herbs. As for the totem patterns on his body... he knew that he was making more progress than his peers. Among the newly-awakened warriors this year, Mao was the publicly acknowledged genius in the tribe, and the totem patterns on his arms only spread out about half a finger's length.

When they were hunting, no one had the spare time nor the energy to pay attention to Shao Xuan's totem patterns, even though he was wearing a sleeveless top made from animal skin. Instead everyone had their attention focused on the prey, for one negligent move could result in death, especially in the forests filled with dangers and risks. All of the warriors were extremely cautious. Also, since Shao Xuan was pretty skilled in using his totem power, his patterns would quickly disappear after the prey was hunted down, before

anybody had the spare time to look around. Hence, no one had noticed the astonishing length of his totem patterns.

Just now, Old Ke had broken his cane out of shock. He didn't believe his eyes at first glance, but after he rubbed them and took a closer look, he finally confirmed that what he saw was real. Naturally, someone else would also be totally stunned if he saw that, for example, Keke.

In fact, Shao Xuan had noticed that Keke glanced at his arm after the first punch. His attack was not really fatal, and Shao Xuan knew it was merely a test. However, what Shao Xuan didn't know was why Keke and Tuo did that.

Lying on the bed, Shao Xuan had finally felt his tense nerves relax after so many days. Life inside the tribe was indeed safe and cozy.

Waking up the next morning, after a good night's sleep, Shao Xuan stretched his body. Surprisingly, he found that his arm was already healed, which was even faster than Old Ke's estimate of "a few days". In fact, he could've recovered quickly even without the herbs he took yesterday.

Shao Xuan made a pot of soup with meat jerky and wild fruits for Caesar and himself. It was not tasty, but he was used to it already. The soup was not much, leaving Shao Xuan and Caesar still hungry.

So he patted Caesar on his head and said, "You'll have your feast once the meat is delivered."

Caesar smacked his lips, while he slowly yawned and stretched.

Seeing Caesar's foolish appearance, Shao Xuan once again thought about the wolf pack's hunting when he was on his way to the second location. Compared to the wolves in the forest, Caesar really did not have a wolf's nature, and if he continued to behave that way, perhaps he would really turn into a dog. Shao Xuan was not sure whether it was a blessing or a curse.

Shao Xuan took a quick shower with a bucket of water, and then dragged Caesar outside and used a fish-teeth brush to clean him. It had been over twenty days, and that little beast was rolling on the ground all day long. Perhaps Ge also had a hand in it, as there were lots of kinks and knots in his hair.

Old Ke would help Shao Xuan clean his house, but that didn't mean that he

would help clean Caesar. In the eyes of Old Ke, Caesar was still leftover prey. Why would anyone clean prey?

When Tuo and Keke were delivering the meat to Shao Xuan's place, they found that Shao Xuan was brushing Caesar's hair outside.

The Shaman had arranged someone else to do the delivery, but Tuo and Keke asked for the job on their own.

"Oh? Is your arm all right?!"

They watched Shao Xuan nimbly brush Caesar's hair, having no traces of an injury at all. Keke put the meat down and instantly he wanted to approach to check on Shao Xuan's arm, but he was stopped by Tuo.

Keke was about to struggle, but Tuo silently said "The team leader," causing Keke to quiet down immediately. When he returned yesterday, he was dragged out and beaten up by the team leader, so his face was still swollen today.

When Tuo and Keke carried the meat inside, Shao Xuan thanked them with a smile. He also wanted to give them some meat as gifts, but got declined politely by Tuo.

Tuo noticed that although Shao Xuan was not wearing a poker face, he also wasn't enthusiastic. However, he couldn't really blame Shao Xuan for that, after all, Keke had broken his arm only yesterday!

Tuo smiled, a little embarrassed, "Well, the Shaman said that early in the morning, on the day after tomorrow, everyone should go to the mountaintop dressed neatly and cleanly, so as to attend the memorial ceremony for the ancestors."

Instead of staying for longer, Tuo dragged Keke away, for he worried Keke might start some trouble again.

After Shao Xuan had finished brushing Caesar's hair, he went inside to check on the food that was delivered.

All of the meat had been properly processed by someone. Even the Thorn Black Wind had been skinned and chopped by some skilled warrior.



A Thorn Black Wind had two layers of skins, one was the hard scales, and the other was very tough thick leather. The two layers had been separated and specially processed, so there was no trace of blood, and they were pretty clean.

Caesar was standing still about two meters away from the meat chunks of the Thorn Black Wind, curious and afraid at the same time. However, he was drooling over the meat, so he growled and ran his tongue around his lips.

Shao Xuan took out the smallest piece of the Thorn Black Wind's meat, after a second thought though, he cut the meat again, and tossed the smallest part to Caesar. Advanced prey contained a lot of energy, and Shao Xuan had no idea how much Caesar would be able to take.

Looking at the pile of food, Shao Xuan calculated for how much salt he could trade with the tribe.

To attend the memorial ceremony of the ancestors later, everyone in the tribe became quite busy. They took out the things that they were most pleased with, since the memorial ceremony could be compared to the Snow Festival. The other hunting team, which was supposed to set off right away, was instead delayed for a few days, and would start the hunting mission after the memorial ceremony.

Shao Xuan asked some tailor to make him a jacket out of the scale layer of the Thorn Black Wind. It was like an armor, and although it looked stupid, it was necessary for him to make a good impression. It was the most direct way for someone to show his ability in the tribe, and Shao Xuan had to observe the customs of the place.

Of course, Shao Xuan didn't forget to send some scaly skins and meat to Mao. After all, he had contributed to the hunting of the Thorn Black Wind.

Only fifty days after the Snow Festival's ceremony, there was yet another grand ceremony within the tribe.

It was not as complicated as the one during the Snow Festival regarding rules and procedures, and no one danced.

Shao Xuan was arranged to stand at the spot closest to the fire pit. Being the real star in finding the ancestors, he was qualified enough to have the position,

and no one else in the tribe was against the decision.

Because of that, there was only one skinny body among the ones that were standing near the fire pit, and it was Shao Xuan.

This time, Shao Xuan didn't dare to allow his mind to drift away. Instead, he paid attention in following the others in this memorial ceremony of their ancestors. He was whispering at heart: Dear ancestors, please kindly give us your blessings in the hunting missions to come! Please shelter us from those troubles!

The four ancestors were cremated in the fire pit. Originally the flame in the fire pit harmed no one, but now it had wrapped up all those dried bodies. Soon enough, four bodies gradually disappeared, and there wasn't even smoke or dirt created. When the flame returned to its normal size, the fire pit went back to normal. There were no ashes of the dead, nothing was left there.

Everyone who passes away in the tribe will be cremated like that, but not everyone has the honor to have such a grand ceremony during the cremation. Let alone that this memorial ceremony was not second to the Snow Festival on scale.

Shao Xuan noticed that the bone ornament was gone. Obviously it was retained by the Shaman. It's reasonable, burning such a treasure would be unwise.

After the sincere worship and prayers, Shao Xuan was summoned by the Shaman after the memorial ceremony.

He asked Shao Xuan about the things that happened in the cave, and it was far more detailed than the other's questioning. Also, the Shaman was paying extra attention to the feelings that Shao Xuan had back in the cave, the so called "totem guidance".

Shao Xuan had explained things properly, but he also played dumb when it was necessary.

Finally, he went back home after being questioned for about an hour.

When Shao Xuan left, the Shaman took out a small box made from jade. He opened it carefully and there were three similar bone ornaments lying inside.

Shao Xuan would be totally surprised if he were here. It turned out that there were more of them. However, the little ball in the middle of the bone ornament was no longer glossy. Instead, it appeared dim.

Beside the jade box, there was a roll of animal skin. It didn't look ancient, but in fact, it was more than a thousand years old.

The Shaman unfolded the roll and inside there were some simple pictures with the appearance of the bone ornaments.

"Finally, all were found." The Shaman sighed.

If there was someone else in the room, he or she would be quite confused. Six bone ornaments were drawn on the animal skin roll, but there were only three of them in the box. Why did the Shaman say "all were found"?

Thinking about Shao Xuan's answers, the Shaman had a trace of smile on his sad face. He knew that Shao Xuan wasn't telling the complete truth, but that was fine.

"The power of the flame will guide you in the right direction. Just like in ancient times, when our ancestors used fire to light up the night." The Shaman had said that, but in fact, there were very few people who could do that. Even if they had the feeling, it was just a blurry one, and almost none of them had an image or a concept as clear as Shao Xuan's. No one could depend on the blurry hints to walk out of the cave. It would be exactly like how the three ancestors had the feeling and they found the Elder at last. However, they couldn't get out from the cave.

Recalling Shao Xuan's abnormal behavior when he was awakened, the Shaman figured his awakening was more like an awakening under the support of a complete flame...

Was that the difference between the complete flame and the incomplete flame?

The Shaman stared at the bone ornaments in front of him. He reached out with his withered hand and touched the dim ball in the middle of the ornament slightly. Then, he put the animal skin roll back, and covered the box with its lid, before putting it back where it was.

Taking two steps back, the Shaman stared at the box silently, and made a sincere salute.

The Elder. It was a title that had been heard in the tribe for a thousand years. He wondered when someone would be addressed by that title again.

# Chapter 66 – Do you know the meaning behind my name?

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Old Ke didn't mention Shao Xuan's astonishing speed of progress to anyone. And based on his observation of the following few days, it seemed that Keke and the others hadn't spread it around either. So in the eyes of other people in the tribe, Shao Xuan was merely a brave and fearless warrior, who was lucky enough to be blessed by the ancestors. Aside from that, he was just as normal as everybody else. Even Ge, who was a frequent guest of Old Ke's had no idea.

Since Shao Xuan returned with lots of game, he sent some food to his acquaintances in the tribe. Old Ke and Ge definitely got a big part of it, Aunt Ah-Yi who helped Shao Xuan with sewing also got her share. Also, the teacher of the orphan cave and the kids in the cave all had their own parts.

Shao Xuan had become quite proficient in stone crafting. A few days earlier the Shaman and the Chief had given him some fine stone cores of high quality. Shao Xuan turned them into a few spearheads, while Old Ke had finished re-crafting and grinding the tooth sword. It wasn't as good looking as before, but was still sharp and could be put to good use.

"Could you please check it? What do you think?" Shao Xuan passed a stone spearhead to Ke.

Old Ke lifted his eyelids slowly. Without holding it in his own hand, he glimpsed at it and said, "Not bad."

It was very difficult to earn the evaluation of "not bad" from Old Ke. Even

when some other stoneware crafters presented their works to him, Old Ke would ruthlessly assess their works as garbage. Compared to them, Shao Xuan was quite proficient in stone crafting skills.

Shao Xuan put the stoneware aside and came in front of Old Ke and said with a chuckle, “You see...I think I have already learnt a thing or two about stone crafting. You have mentioned that if I want to make progress, I should practice more...So, I think...uh...can we get started on the next stage of teaching?”

Old Ke wasn't famous for stone crafting back in his days. He was famous for setting impressive traps!

“Do you want to learn?” Old Ke asked in a low voice, “it's very tough.”

“Of course I do! I'm not afraid of hardship!” Shao Xuan nodded in a hurry.

“Okay, then you can come here tomorrow morning.”

“Yes! Okay, then I'm off!” Shao Xuan left after he had helped Old Ke to set the stone pot and chop the firewood.

When Shao Xuan left, Old Ke's poker face finally loosened and he began to smile.

Early in the morning the next day, Old Ke was already waiting there when Shao Xuan arrived Old Ke's place with Caesar.

“Bring that.” Old Ke pointed to a medium sized wooden box, and walked out with his cane.

Shao Xuan hastened to carry the box. It was heavy, and he didn't open it to see what was inside.

Caesar was still yawning. When he got knocked on the head by a wooden cane, he bared his teeth and looked up, only to find that it was Old Ke, so in a hurry he closed his mouth. Unexpectedly, Old Ke walked towards Caesar's side. Suddenly he sat on Caesar's back, which almost pressed the unguarded wolf to the ground.

Caesar twisted his waist uneasily, but got schooled by Old Ke's cane. In this mountain foot area, Old Ke was the only one that Caesar was afraid of.

“To the training ground.” Old Ke pointed out the direction with his cane.

“Okay.” Shao Xuan carried the tool box and headed that way.

Caesar was one year old, and he was growing quickly. Often he helped Old Ke and Shao Xuan lift and carry some things, so of course he could bear Old Ke’s weight. Earlier Old Ke just caught him unprepared, so he almost fell.

So, as Ge was chewing on a piece of meat jerky as he walked around in the morning, he saw Old Ke sitting on Caesar’s back with his cane in his arms. Ge almost choked seeing that scene.

Ge was quite familiar with Old Ke, he was in the same team as Old Ke when he got injured. Since Ge was quite idle and also had a thick skin, he would constantly come to Old Ke’s place to spend time together.

In the eyes of Ge, Old Ke was too prideful. When he withdrew from the hunting team due to the loss of a leg, he didn’t allow others to help. In the end, he moved down the mountain and isolated himself from his old pals, in order to not take their gifts. He considered the gifts as pity, so it wounded his pride. Every year when he had to go up the mountain to attend the ritual, he wouldn’t ask for anyone’s help either. No carrying, no lifting, no holding. He used his cane and the remaining leg to slowly move up the hill. It seemed that he was afraid of people saying that he couldn’t walk. So he had to prove them wrong by his deeds. It had been the same for decades.

But now?

Who was the one on a wolf’s back?

Or did he have a different opinion on different species? Did he choose not to walk on his own? Was he not afraid of being judged?

Where’s your so-called “pride”? Got eaten by Caesar?!

There were a few small hills covered by trees and other plants beside the training ground. Normally people would cut the timber from there. There weren’t many kinds of plants, and aside from the flying stonemouse, which had strong breeding ability, very few animals lived there. Perhaps all others had died out a long time ago.

Deforestation was quite normal here, so the trees were less thicker than the trees in the hunting forest. But it was sufficient for daily use, and some of these trees were as thick as buckets.

Why did warriors want to hunt? The answer: In order to strategically pursue the optimum energy intake.

Vegetables, fruits, grains, fish and animal meat were all in the diet of the people in the tribe. Vegetables, fruits and grains could be found among the short hills nearby, but they weren't large in quantities. While fish was added in the menu only last year, and most of it was eaten by people in the mountain foot district. As for the animal meat, it was the real staple food for people in the tribe. Also, it contained the most energy, especially the meat from high level beasts.

As a result, people in the tribe would hunt. It complied with the developing strategy made by the ancestors, and could provide them with the need for energy as well. The senior warriors preferred high level prey, for food that contained less energy was no help for them.

While hunting, besides killing the prey by stabbing or slashing it, warriors would use all kinds of traps to help them in hunting. Good lassos and traps could be very dangerous killers who hid in the dark.

Old Ke was a master in creating those hidden killers.

After he got down from Caesar's back, Old Ke didn't start teaching Shao Xuan how to make a trap immediately. Instead, he told Shao Xuan about the things that he should be aware of. For example, how to take advantage of the environment and blend the traps with the environment.

After that lecture, Old Ke began to make a trap. He started from the simple ones, and as he was making it step by step, he explained all the technical points in detail. Different traps had different features. There was the cave trap, crossing trap, ground trap, *etc.* While, there were many small changes that needed to be made according to different types of prey.

How large should the cap of the trap be? Should it be altered based on the girth of a prey's head? Should one use animal hair or straw rope to connect different traps? Should it be a single-knot trap, or double-knot trap, or



composite trap? Or is there need to make a combined trap? Should one dig a hole? What about the thorn bed? Should it have a thorn bed?

Although Shao Xuan had often seen Lang Ga set a trap, but listening to Old Ke's explanation, he finally got to understand that Lang Ga and Old Ke had their own styles in setting traps.

Lang Ga got his skills from his grandpa, and his grandpa was a master in setting traps. However, Old Ke had his own style and features.

Simply speaking, the traps that Old Ke set were more sinister and vicious, and more likely to make an overkill.

After demonstrating a few simple traps, Old Ke told Shao Xuan to have a try.

But, to set a trap, one needed straw rope. The straw ropes that they brought today were all used up.

"Are you skilled in making straw ropes? Do I need to teach you that? Making a straw rope and tying knots are both very important if you want to set up a good trap." Said Old Ke.

Shao Xuan had a few straws at hand, and instead of answering directly, he raised a question, "Do you know what's the meaning behind my name? The word 'Xuan'?"

Old Ke paused his knotting action, for he really didn't know.

People in the tribe tended to pick their names casually. For most of the times they would name themselves after whatever came to their minds first. For example, Old Ke named himself Ke randomly. Also, someone would name themselves after the things they were familiar with, or the things that they felt important. For example, Mao. And someone would use some kind of sound to name themselves, for example, Keke.

Old Ke lifted his eyelids, waiting for Shao Xuan to answer his own question.

Shao Xuan shook the straw rope at hand, before he moved his fingers and tightened the rope. Easily, a simple-looking knot was finished. He giggled, "Don't you think that my name Xuan looks like the knot made from a straw rope?"

He was not lying. When he was born in his last life, his grandma was making a straw rope. Later on when he was about to be named, the old lady found an ancient decoration. It was a tortoise shell with inscriptions on it. At the first sight, she noticed and liked the word “Xuan” as it was written in a distorted shape, so his grandma said, “So the boy should be called Xuan. The word looks like the straw rope that we are making.”

While in the written language in the tribe, ‘Xuan’ also looked similar to the character in his last life. So Shao Xuan’s explanation raised no doubt at all.

Old Ke glimpsed at the knots made by Shao Xuan, and then looked at the knots he just made. They were the ones that he had demonstrated earlier, and he only made the demonstrations once today!

Among those knots, there were a few kinds of them that were designed by himself when he was hunting. They seemed to be easy to him, but with a slight offset, it would be totally different, and affect the effects of the trap later. With a single offset, those sly beasts in the forest would be able to escape.

Pursuing perfect kills, Old Ke had very strict rules and standards towards ropes and knots, but...

Before, he intended to teach slowly, for many learners could not manage to make a complete knot after a whole day. However, unexpectedly this kid could successfully make a perfect knot when he was only shown how just once!

Old Ke pulled up the corners of his shaking lips, and thought, was the kid born just to learn this?

That is so...fucking exciting!!!

# Chapter 67 – Training

---

Translated by Sunyancai

On a small hill near the training grounds of the tribe, the trees there weren't that thick, but were dense in quantities. Fresh green leaves covered all the branches, and the bushes and grass nearby were growing wildly. In this season, all plants were flourishing.

There was a little path of small stones, where people would constantly walk on. On the sides of that path, some year old plants were at the height of people's waist. While further away, one could totally hide behind those branches and leaves without being spotted by others.

Shao Xuan held a half-arm-long stone sword in his hand, and walked on the stone path that seemed to be no different from others.

It rained the previous day, and all the dirt on the grass and leaves was washed away. A faint smell of unknown flowers filled drifted in the air.

Afar, booming sounds could be heard in the mountains. Those mountains didn't have any green at all. Compared to that, those few short hills were much quieter, and there seemed to be no danger nearby.

However, Shao Xuan tightly grasped the stone sword, looking very serious. He did not dare to be careless at all.

Old Ke was teaching Shao Xuan about setting traps, but the teaching method changed after only two days.

In Old Ke's theory, if you want to catch a bear, then you have to use the bear's thinking pattern. If you want to hunt down a beast, you'll have to put

yourself into the beast's shoes. In other words, if you want to make a perfect trap which could kill whatever comes inside, you'll have to personally experience the profound secrets hidden behind every trap.

Facing all those traps, if you couldn't see through them and take them out, you'd be in a dangerous situation in the real hunting grounds.

Although Shao Xuan felt that he was asking to get tortured himself, he agreed to follow Old Ke's command, and experience the deadly killers hidden behind the branches, stones, and leaves, where they weren't easy to be spotted.

To be brief, Shao Xuan was the prey himself.

Shao Xuan began to walk on that path of stone, with the stone sword tightly grasped in his hand. He glanced at the path ahead, and began to increase his pace as traces of hesitation appeared in his eyes.

Hum!

It was like the quiver sound from a thin tendon of some beast.

It came from the right side of the path, at least four of them!

Shao Xuan didn't stop and kept running. He used the full strength of his feet and leapt high in the air. With a few swings of his arm, the sword was flashing left and right, and a row of snapping sounds were heard. That was the collision between the stone arrowheads and stone sword. Two of the arrowheads were dodged by Shao Xuan and two were blocked by the stone sword. At the same time that he leapt, Shao Xuan's body was twisted in a strange but funny manner, with the head, arms and legs stretched or turned in different directions.

By his gesture, no one could tell what he was planning to do next, but almost at the same time that he changed his posture, some other needles from the other side of the path missed Shao Xuan by inches. They were shot out together with the stone arrowheads simultaneously, but without much noise. Because of the humming sound earlier, most people would tend to guard against the right side immediately because of the conditioned reflexes, while ignoring the more stealthy assassination from the other side. If Shao Xuan wasn't twisted in that posture, he would've been easily shot by the needles instead, even though he

avoided the attack from the stone arrowheads.

Duh! Duh! Duh!

The hard needles pierced into the trunk of the tree opposite, and they pierced half way into the wood!

Shao Xuan didn't land directly after he dodged the first round of attack, but grasped on the little branch spread from a tree. He was very agile on his moves, and made a flexible roll ahead. With the strength he borrowed from that small branch, he jumped over the relatively big branch which stretched above the path, without touching any leaves on that big branch.

After he landed, Shao Xuan instantly sprinted ahead, and almost right after he moved his feet, a finger-thick stone arrowhead pierced the ground where Shao Xuan was standing a second ago. For quite a few times, the stone arrowhead nailed on the ground due to Shao Xuan's footsteps, but Shao Xuan kept running without being affected by those arrowheads.

When Shao Xuan was running, he didn't run along a straight route, and there was no regular pattern in his running.

When he made yet another leap, he stepped on a branch nearby and pushed himself up again. During the two connected leaps, he dodged all the arrowheads flying in the air. Shao Xuan rolled his wrist and five small stones were grasped between his fingers. He fired the stones towards the bushes ahead. At the next moment, sound of wood cracking was heard coming from down there.

When dropping down, Shao Xuan reached out his hand and gripped on the tip of a branch, to alter his falling route. With one salto before landing, he made a roll on the ground, to remove most of the impact. Meanwhile, he saw an arm-thick stone spike rushing at him from the corner of his eyes.

A gray sword shadow flickered.

The stone sword did not reflect the sunlight, but as it slashed the stone spike, a gray flash suddenly appeared in the forest.

There was no metallic luster, but anyone who saw the sword would be able to feel an icy sharpness coming from it.

It had only been a few breath's time since Shao Xuan set foot on the stone path.

Looking at the path behind him, Shao Xuan could see that there were many stone arrowheads, wooden needles and stone spikes lying on it, together with some shaking stakes and broken stones. One minute earlier it was just a quiet path with grass and bushes on the sides.

Shao Xuan looked up at some place nearby and asked, "How was I?"

"No good." Old Ke sat on a piece of stone and said with a poker face.

Shao Xuan rubbed his head, "I feel the same."

Old Ke didn't have to say it, as Shao Xuan headed back to remove and clean up all the traps set along the path, whether triggered or not. Shao Xuan had to clear them all, or else other people from the tribe would be in danger when they walked on that path. There were also a few small holes in the ground, but they couldn't be seen normally by people.

Everyday, Shao Xuan would follow this training routine, where Old Ke was responsible for setting the traps, and Shao Xuan ran through them.

That was a masochistic, abnormal training method, and someone with less willpower would have a nervous-breakdown easily. When one became too nervous, he would become neurotic and feel that there were traps everywhere.

In fact, Shao Xuan kind of had that feeling for the first two days. When they returned to the tribe, he would flinch at every little bit of sound. It was totally over the top, but he got better afterwards.

Old Ke had a feeling of relief as he stared at Shao Xuan, who was busy clearing out the traps. Initially, he was pretty worried about whether his training method would backfire on the kid. He planned to give him guidance after five days of training. But out of his expectation, Shao Xuan had already adapted himself to it before he needed to do anything.

In the beginning, Shao Xuan got wounded a lot, but soon he could narrowly

dodge all the traps and keep himself safe. A little later, he could safely dodge all of them, while cutting down the connections among a few linked traps. All the changes happened in half a month!

It was far beyond Old Ke's expectation, but he was afraid that Shao Xuan might become overconfident and proud, so he kept wearing his poker face all along, and ruthlessly criticized once he found a flaw.

Shao Xuan removed all the things on the path, and completely disassembled all the untriggered traps. He buried them all before he went over to Old Ke, and sat beside him for his comments.

In the eyes of Old Ke, the worst strategy to deal with all those traps was to take them head on. When you can dodge the danger, why not do so? Why force yourself to struggle so hard?

Certainly, according to Old Ke, when facing with traps, the experts would be able to find the best breaking point immediately, and use the least amount strength to break a series of traps. When finding the right breaking point of a linked trap, one could directly cut down the connections between the traps. While the greatest could use the other's traps to their advantage!

The so called "Defeat the enemy without a battle" was saying the same thing. However, Shao Xuan still had a long way to go.

Unlike the experts mentioned by Old Ke, Shao Xuan couldn't see through all the traps along the path, neither could he cut down the connections between serial traps every single time. Listening to Old Ke's explanation every day, sometimes Shao Xuan would have thoughts that perhaps he was too slow at learning? Was he an idiot?

If Old Ke knew about Shao Xuan's thoughts, he would be completely freaking out; others might not be able to do the same after training 150 days, while he was thinking about doing it faster?!

Some of Old Ke's skills now were passed on from former generations. Some were more conservative on the art of traps, while others tried to be as sinister as possible. However, they had one thing in common, which was finding the right person and passing down all their skills to the apprentice, so as to pass on the skills to the next generation.

Old Ke looked up at the sky, cherishing his memory, “Back in my days, I went through all the things that you are experiencing now, however, I did better.”

“You were totally awesome.” Shao Xuan didn’t deliberately avoid the thing about Old Ke’s leg, for that would hurt his old pride. Since Old Ke had moved-on himself from the ancient injury, why should anyone else need to show him sympathy? Old Ke didn’t need that.

“How long did you take to become an extreme expert?” Shao Xuan asked curiously.

“No, I didn’t achieve that even when I was at my best.”



# Chapter 68 – A good hound serves as the hunter's eyes and ears

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Sponsored by Nathanael

All the residents in the mountain foot district knew that Old Ke didn't take any work in stoneware crafting anymore. People didn't know what he was doing all day, but everyday, early in the morning, he would sit on a wolf's back with his cane in his arms, and only late at night would he return home...

While Old Ke didn't have to trade for food himself, for Shao Xuan's game was beyond enough for both of them. In Shao Xuan's words, he was "paying the tuition" with the meat, and Old Ke didn't decline his offer after thinking about the proposal.

One person set the traps, while the other made every effort to break them. Although Old Ke was very tired these days, he was in quite a good mood. Finally, he could practice and perform all he had learnt after he left the hunting team. Although his skills weren't as good as during his days in the hunting team, they were enough to benefit Shao Xuan after all.

Seeing that Shao Xuan got schooled by those traps and lassos every day, Old Ke had a good laugh. In his youth he was also being schooled that way. However, he wasn't as talented as Shao Xuan now, and his schooling took much longer. So long, that even now, he refused to think of those days. Hence, Old Ke

took every single minute to prolong Shao Xuan's experience in feeling those "mysterious" moments.

Old Ke knew at heart that Shao Xuan was very talented. Perhaps after some time, all the traps he set wouldn't be able to stop him. If Old Ke was at his peak, he could have been able to "school" Shao Xuan for longer.

"Alas..." Old Ke was a little upset, but not as gloomy as he used to be.

"What are you sighing about?" Shao Xuan climbed up the mountain with a face full of mud, and sat beside Old Ke. These days Old Ke made a few advanced traps, and in order to avoid the short arrowshots from the brushwood, he was hit in the face with a ball of mud. That mud seemed to know that he was going to present himself there at that time, and it was just waiting for him. Since Shao Xuan had no time left to dodge it, he had to meet the mud with his face. What if it weren't mud but anything else?

Shao Xuan felt that he still had a lot to learn.

For the one that got hunted, he could only be considered an expert if he could see through all kinds of traps. Being the one that hunts, one could only be considered an expert if he could set a trap that could ascertain the kill.

Even so, many people in the tribe felt that learning that skill was more or less a useless option. Who would have so much time to set a trap in the hunting grounds? Everyone had to fight brutally by force!

But Shao Xuan had the feeling that perhaps it could be of great use later if he learnt it now.

Old Ke harshly criticized Shao Xuan's movements earlier, and then looked at him to check his response. He noticed that Shao Xuan was thinking hard while he stared at the trap zone beneath. Old Ke felt comforted seeing that Shao Xuan didn't get upset or reluctant because of his criticism.

Even though Old Ke was making harsh comments all the time, deep down at heart he was worried that Shao Xuan might have some problems with him. It was rare for him to find such a young talent with all his skills. If Shao Xuan quits halfway, Old Ke would be vomiting blood out of his chest.

.....

Old Ke told Shao Xuan that he back in his days did better than him, and it was only because that he had been learning more than one hundred days. However, it had only been less than twenty days since Shao Xuan started learning...less than twenty days...

Shao Xuan was still thinking about Old Ke's comments earlier, and compared Old Ke's comments to his own movements. when Old Ke felt something and looked at somewhere on the hill. There was no one there a minute ago, but now, someone was standing right there.

It was Ta, the team leader of Shao Xuan's hunting team, also the trueborn son of the Chief. He was one of the few senior totem warriors in the tribe, and a candidate for the next Chief election.

Old Ke recognized him with one glimpse.

Old Ke did not have much connection with Ta. At his peak, Ta was merely a junior warrior, just as Mao now. When Old Ke quit from the hunting team, Ta was only a group leader in one of the hunting groups. However, Old Ke had heard the stories from some old pals, that Ta didn't value setting traps at all. And he was even more so after he entered the advance group. Only a few warriors in the advance group knew a thing or two about setting traps, and there was no expert at all.

They were of two different opinions, and people holding different opinions could hardly be friends. So Old Ke had no good impression of Ta all the time.

And, Ta wasn't looking at Old Ke in a friendly way either.

Originally, Ta planned to recruit Shao Xuan into the advance group. Of course it was just an attempt. He thought that since Shao Xuan was under the protection of the ancestors, he should have the good luck blessed by the ancestors. Wouldn't taking Shao Xuan into his hunting group increase their chances of a successful hunting mission with loads of things to harvest?

Since last year, the hunting results for Ta's hunting team had a sharp drop. Although Ta's team would bring back many ferocious beasts after every hunting mission in the eyes of the public, in fact, they hadn't finished lots of their tasks. Regarding the achievements, Ta's team's wasn't as good as the other hunting team's.

The team leaders of both hunting teams were candidates for the next Chief election, and they had been competing with each other ever since. Seeing that the other side was exceeding his team for quite some time, Ta was quite anxious. This time, since the incident with the ancestors happened, he focused his attention on Shao Xuan, who was almost the same age as his own son.

Ta had heard of some of the details in the last hunting mission. The more he learnt, the more satisfied he was with Shao Xuan. At first, he assumed that Shao Xuan was only a little bit stronger than his son, with more advanced night-seeing ability and a little bit of good fortune. However, when Keke had tested him later, he realized that the kid was making prompt progress... Perhaps that was the reason why the Shaman liked him?

Ta had mentioned Shao Xuan's fast speed of progress to no one. He asked Keke and Tuo to keep it a secret as well.

Even if there was no clear rule that prevented newly-awakened warriors to join the advance group, they would normally choose some senior warriors with more experience in hunting missions. They would be able to protect themselves if anything happened. Truly there was no precedence of recruiting a newly-awakened warrior into the advance group.

The next hunting trip was approaching, and Ta planned to discuss with the Shaman these days, and recruit a newly-awakened warriors into the advance group. Although there was no clear rule, he had to ask first. As for the Chief... The Chief was his father, of course he would be on his son's side. Naturally, the Chief wouldn't be an obstacle there.

He heard that Shao Xuan was training in here these days, so he came to check on him. However, he found that Shao Xuan was merely learning about setting traps with some old guy who quit from the hunting team! It was such a waste of his talent! Such a disappointing thing!

As Ta and Old Ke were judging each other with unfriendly looks, Shao Xuan came back from his meditation, "Hey!"

Ta looked along Shao Xuan and Old Ke's sights, and found that the wolf labeled by the Shaman was running up the mountain from below. He was

running happily, who would think that he was a wolf?! He was so lame compared with the wolves in the forest!

Ta had no appreciation for Caesar. In his perspective, it was better to chop it and feed it to the people in the tribe, or he would just waste more food if he was kept alive. The more he thought about it, the more dissatisfied he became. Ta felt that Shao Xuan had many things that he didn't approve of, if he weren't seeking for the ancestors blessing, he wouldn't allow Shao Xuan to join the advance group, even if Shao Xuan grew into an excellent mid-level warrior.

At the other side, Shao Xuan didn't care for other people's opinions, for he was busy being happy about his training for Caesar.

Caesar cheerfully ran to Shao Xuan with a palm-sized animal skin bag in his mouth. He placed the bag in front of Shao Xuan, and sat down next to him, waiting to be praised.

"Good job!" Shao Xuan praised him generously, and tossed him a long prepared beast's meat as his reward for getting the task done.

"What are you doing, Ah-Xuan?" Old Ke was curious.

Shao Xuan poured out a few fruits from the animal skin bag, and then collected the bag into his pocket. He smiled, "There's a saying, that a good hound serves as the eyes and ears of the hunter. I'm trying to train Caesar into a good hound. Perhaps he would be able to help in the hunting missions later."

Ta was about to leave disappointedly, but at that word, he stopped in his tracks and kept listening.

"Good hound?" Old Ke was confused.

"Even the slyest fox couldn't escape from a hound's nose." Said Shao Xuan.

"Hound?" asked Old Ke.

Ta was paying attention to Shao Xuan's explanation, too. He felt pretty interested in taking advantage of the wolf's sense of smell.

"Hound. It's a trained wolf."

Shao Xuan was training Caesar, and he taught him to find things by smell. At first it was clothes, then bones, and fruits afterwards. Now, Shao Xuan wanted

to ask Caesar to find something with even fainter smell.

“Wolves have sharp nose.” Shao Xuan smiled.

“The Shaman taught you that? It is a good method.” Old Ke said without much interest.

At Old Ke’s words, Shao Xuan responded with a single “Um”, and gave no further explanation.

In fact, he would love to bring the scene depicted on the walls of the orphan cave back to life. However, since someone deliberately covered it up with stone powder, Shao Xuan chose not to reveal the secret easily. Before he left the orphan cave, he painted a layer of stone powder on the fresco when the other kids were fishing outside. The window of that stone room was blocked as well, and no one had noticed that.

When they had enough rest and were about to head back home, Shao Xuan glanced at where Ta was standing earlier and sneered, before leaving with Old Ke’s tool box in his hand.

# Chapter 69 – Joining the advance group

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan was about to have his second hunting trip. Even though he wanted to work on Old Ke's newly-invented serial traps, he did not have enough time to spend on placing traps and ropes. It was close, but time was limited. It had been nineteen days since the other hunting team left, and they would be back in a few days. Now, all the warriors in Shao Xuan's hunting team were preparing to set off.

It would be the second hunting trip that Shao Xuan would take part in, and the third hunting mission this year. According to the traditional standards within the tribe, there would be more newly-awakened warriors hunting this time around. In order to look after those new warriors during the mission, there would also be more experienced warriors tagging along with the team as their guardians. Because of this, Shao Xuan anticipated that there would be about fifty more warriors in the hunting team than last time. (E/N: In case you're confused it's the third hunting trip for his team, not counting the other team.)

For example, Sai, who used to have a problem with Shao Xuan, and Sai's father, who had missed the past few trips in order to train his son, would join this hunting mission. Luckily, many residents in the mountain foot district, who were unable to store as much food as people in the mountain side or mountaintop, were able to go fishing. Hence, they had to focus their attention on those fish in the waters. Even though the energy the fish contained was not comparable to beasts from the forest, it could at least keep the residents from starving.

Old Ke did not ask Shao Xuan to go to the training ground any more, for Shao

Xuan had to use these last few days to craft more pieces of stoneware to be used. The stone cores all came from the Shaman and the Chief as gifts for his great deed in finding the ancestors. Naturally the stoneware crafted from them would also be of fine quality.

Perhaps Caesar also sensed that Shao Xuan was about to leave, as these days he followed Shao Xuan closely everywhere, and sometimes he would even act like a spoiled child, with his nose and head clung to Shao Xuan's hands.

Shao Xuan was not sure whether it was an illusion or not, but he felt that after feeding Caesar the meat of ferocious beasts over the last ten days, Caesar had grown much bigger and stronger than before. Caesar liked the meat of ferocious beasts very much, and was especially fond of the Thorn Black Wind meat. After eating these, he would refuse to eat fish sometimes. Well, he grew picky.

There was still a lot of meat remaining in his cabin, so Shao Xuan took most of it over to Old Ke's place. It should be sufficient for them to eat for over ten days, allowing Shao Xuan not to worry about the man and the wolf's food while he went on the hunting mission.

As Shao Xuan was communicating with Old Ke about which traps fit what kinds of ferocious beasts, he heard someone calling his name from outside.

Old Ke nodded towards the door, indicating that Shao Xuan should go and have a look.

Shao Xuan lifted the curtain, and found that Tuo was standing outside the door. He came without Keke this time.

"I went to your cabin earlier, and no one was inside, as I expected, you're here instead." Tuo waved at Shao Xuan, "The Shaman asked for you."

Old Ke's eyelids twitched, and he stopped the work at hand.

Since the Shaman asked for him, there was no reason for stalling. Shao Xuan told Old Ke about it and told Caesar to go inside, while he followed Tuo up to the mountaintop.

They were about to set off for the next hunting mission. Why did the Shaman summon him now?



He came to the same stone room where he was questioned about the ancestors after the memorial ceremony. It was the Shaman's guestroom, and normally all conversations happened there.

The team leader Ta was standing right outside the stone room, and he showed a rare smile upon seeing Shao Xuan.

Tuo did not enter the room, and the Shaman was waiting inside alone. He sat on a straw mattress with a smile, looking extremely gentle and kind. However, if you took a closer look, you'll surprisingly find out that it was totally impossible to expect what he was about to say.

Seeing Shao Xuan come, the Shaman pointed to another straw mattress in front of him, indicating Shao Xuan to sit.

After a proper salute, Shao Xuan sat down with his legs crossed, waiting for the Shaman to start the conversation.

The Shaman looked at Shao Xuan in silence, not eager to say anything. Shao Xuan kept waiting in silence, as well. He was in no rush, for he was prepared to wait.

A short while later, the smile on the Shaman's face grew clearer, and he opened his mouth slowly, "Show me your totem patterns."

Shao Xuan had prepared for that when he saw Ta at the door, so he was not surprised the slightest bit. As he urged the totem power inside him, immediately totem patterns began to reveal on his face. Meanwhile, the totem patterns climbed on his uncovered shoulders and arms, and the patterns passed his shoulders for over the length of a palm.

Seeing the totem pattern on Shao Xuan's upper arm, the Shaman nodded, "Impressive, indeed. No wonder Ta asked for to have you join his hunting group."

The advance group?

Shao Xuan had hopes, but since he had heard from Lang Ga and the others that it was more than difficult to be selected as a member of the advance group, he felt that he would not be chosen as one of them because he was just awakened this year. However, unexpectedly, that was really why he was

summoned by the Shaman.

Shao Xuan had no idea what the difference between the advance group and other hunting groups was. Only those in the advance group knew what the tasks were, no one else. However, according to Lang Ga and the other's gossip, the advance group had their own extra tasks.

No matter what, there was no denying that the advance group would encounter more trouble. The things that happened in the normal hunting group was messy enough for Shao Xuan. He knew himself well. Even though he was making much faster progress than others, he was still a junior totem warrior who had awakened only this year. Was Ta not afraid that he would be a liability that holds the advance group back?

What were they thinking?! These people!

"I don't think that I have such capability." Shao Xuan said.

"Indeed. Normally all warriors in the advance group would be mid-level warriors, or almost mid-level warriors. You are not. However, Ta values your capability and he came to me personally, to recruit you into his hunting group." Said the Shaman.

Valued my capability? What kind of capability? Shao Xuan was confused, but he figured it out soon enough.

Why did the people in the tribe envy Shao Xuan very much? Because of the blessings of the ancestors!

Seeing that Shao Xuan kept his silence, looking puzzled, the Shaman continued, "You needn't worry. No one will force you if you do not want to join the advance group. As for Ta...I'll turn him down for you."

When he was about to decline the offer, he hesitated while thinking about something, "Are there more benefits for people in the advance group?"

Shao Xuan had discovered that there were some advantages for the elite group in the tribe. Aside from some advantages that are common to all in the tribe, people of higher ability would be able to receive more preferential

treatments. Also, the leadership of the tribe would be glad to offer them more help.

“Benefits?”

“Yes, for example, Tuo had better herbs.”

The Shaman smiled at Shao Xuan’s words, “Of course there are more benefits. Every single warrior in the advance group would be assigned a pack of fine herbs when hunting. It could further stimulate the healing ability inside a warrior, hence to accelerate the process of healing.”

“Is the pack of herbs distributed ahead of time?” Shao Xuan asked.

“It will be distributed to the people one day before the hunting.”

All herbs were distributed by the Shaman, and only the Shaman knew how to mix the herbs properly.

Shao Xuan sat still and said quite seriously, “It’s an honor for me to gain the team leader’s acknowledgement. Of course I would be glad to join the advance group! There’s no reason for declining.”

The Shaman was totally speechless, “...” Then why were you making a complex expression earlier?

“It’s just...” Shao Xuan showed a little embarrassment, “Can I take an other kind of herb?”

“An other kind? You may easily get wounded during a hunting mission, and the speed of healing would be essentially important. Without the healing herbs, you would be exposed to danger in much higher odds.” Said the Shaman

“I know. But can I have an other kind of herb?”

The Shaman felt a little complicated, for he had never met anyone else with such thick skin at a young age. Certainly, the Shaman had already known a thing or two about Shao Xuan’s thick skin, so facing Shao Xuan’s request, he was only slightly surprised, but not so perturbed.

“So what do you want?” the Shaman was still in an eased tone.

“Health recovering herbs, do you have any?”

He was asking those kind of herbs for Old Ke. Based on his performance when setting traps, one could easily find that Old Ke's ability was falling short of his wishes. He was getting old fast. Due to stone crafting for a long time inside the room, he caught some occupational diseases. Healthy warriors of course could heal and have those pains relieved by their tough physiques, but Old Ke could not do the same. Shao Xuan could constantly hear his subdued coughing.

For most of the year, Old Ke would lock himself in the dim room of his, crafting stoneware. He was not as tough as before having lost one of his legs, and most of the food he traded for, with the stoneware, was the meat of inferior beasts or other animals. Yet, Old Ke was a mid-level warrior back in those days; the energy contained in inferior food would never be able to meet up with his needs. As time went by like that, the strong body of this mid-level warrior degenerated as well. It seemed that Old Ke was getting older much faster than the others.

Now since Shao Xuan was able to join the hunting team, he didn't worry about the meat issue anymore. However, after suffering from chronic illness for so many years, Old Ke could use some herbs to nurse himself back to health. Normal herbs might not work, so Shao Xuan wanted to take some more effective herbs from the Shaman. The tribe had a tradition of elite preferential treatment, so normally all good stuff would be distributed to only those who were the elites. Other warriors had no access to fine herbs, for after all, they were hard to obtain and limited in quantities. This time, since Shao Xuan had the chance for being considered as an elite, he planned to take advantage of that. Ta had raised the proposal, even if Shao Xuan declined him this time, he would be facing a second round after all. That team leader was not someone that easily gave up.

Shao Xuan knew at heart that even if he could not be of great help to the mission, he would be kept safe by Ta, for Ta wanted him only for the reason that he was blessed by the ancestors. Ta would definitely try his best to ensure his safety. What's more, Shao Xuan figured that if this time's hunting result was still not good enough, he would be kicked out of the advance group, and then his next opportunity in rejoining would not come by so easily again.

However, Old Ke was getting older and weaker as every day went by...

This was an incredible opportunity.

When the Shaman was having the conversation with Shao Xuan inside the guest room, Ta waited patiently some distance away from the stone room. He could not hear the talk, but he knew that the Shaman would surely reject his proposal if Shao Xuan refused to comply.

After a while, Shao Xuan came out and left with an animal skin bag in his hand.

Ta entered.

“He chose to join.” Said the Shaman.

Ta felt quite happy about it, and as he looked up to express his gratitude, he saw the Shaman’s old cloudy eyes.

It seemed that the Shaman’s eyes were just like normal, but Ta felt an enormous psychological pressure. He sensed that the Shaman was angry, and all his anger was on him.

Ta dared not continue to look at the Shaman, so he looked down again, and made a sincere salute to him, “Please trust me. I’ll bring him back, safe and sound.”

The Shaman said nothing but waved his hand to let Ta leave.

After he left the stone room, Ta wiped his forehead and found a handful of sweat.

# Chapter 70 – You just rest assured

---

Translated by Sunyancai

The Shaman gave Shao Xuan a pack of herbs which could help with health recovery, but also allowed him to get the herbs for healing injuries. He told Shao Xuan to go to Ta's place one day before the hunting trip to get them.

It was not a large pack, but there were quite a few kinds of herbs that were extremely hard to find. So Shao Xuan did not get much, but according to the Shaman, it was ten days' dosage.

If he returned safely, he would still have further opportunities, even if he got kicked out from the advance group and rejoined his former hunting group. Also, he could try to trade for the herbs with the Shaman without being a member of the advance group. However, he decided to wait for the effect of the herbs. Shao Xuan didn't know whether Old Ke would get better after taking them.

The second hunting team returned at the twenty-first day of the hunting trip, with three warriors badly injured and one being unaccounted for. Being missing meant that he must have died already, and his remains were nowhere to be found.

Apparently this time the hunting team had encountered big trouble, however the game they brought back aroused the people's excitement. Aside from the relatives of the dead and the injured, all folks from the warriors' families shouted out loud and cheerfully. They won't have to worry about the food for the next twenty days.

At dusk, Tuo came to Shao Xuan's cabin to deliver him a message, "Ah-Xuan, you should go to the team leader's place to fetch something for the hunting trip

tomorrow. We'll set off the day after tomorrow."

"Okay, got it. Thanks!"

Tuo did not enter the room, for he had to notify a few other warriors who were on patrol.

Shao Xuan looked outside the window, and found that the night swallows were already quite active at that time. Almost all the people in the mountain foot district returned to their own homes. But unlike the times before, this time some of the kids in mountain foot district got to go on their first hunting trip, naturally they were quite excited. During daylight they were busy with training, while at night, they would just roar their excitement out.

Shao Xuan closed the window and then set out the few stone arrowheads that he crafted today.

It's said that the advance group would go deeper in the forest to do the hunting, where it would be much more dangerous. However, Shao Xuan had no idea what the difference was exactly. More ferocious beasts? Or something else? Given the game that the advanced force brought back was almost the same kind, Shao Xuan could not see anything special after all.

The next day, Shao Xuan went up to the mountaintop district to Ta's place, where he met a lot of warriors in the advance group.

Due to the fact that there was no notice in advance, almost all the warriors in the advance group were pretty surprised to see that Shao Xuan would be in their hunting group this time. Some of them also raised their concerns and doubts about the decision, but all oppositions were suppressed and put down by Ta.

After taking that pack of mixed herbs, Shao Xuan was kept there to meet the other warriors in the advance group. However, there was no real conversation, for they still considered Shao Xuan as more of a kid than a warrior. Regarding the strength, Shao Xuan was indeed the weakest, so he just faced their doubts and sneers with a slight smile. No further explanation was made.

On the day that the hunting team was about to set off, Shao Xuan dropped off Caesar at Old Ke's place.

Facing Old Ke's concerned look, Shao Xuan clenched his fist, "Believe in me, you can just rest assured."

However, Shao Xuan's promise cracked Old Ke's hope, and he was even more worried.

Last time before the kid set off for the hunting trip, he said the exact words of "you rest assured", but he met the Thorn Black Wind, and then got lost in the mountain after his survival. It's said that Mai and the others' faces turned totally pale when they finally found him. What's more, he was going to tag along with the advance group this time! Didn't that mean that he would be facing more dangers?

Rest assured? Rest the hell assured!

Seeing Shao Xuan's back as he climbed up the mountain with the equipment, Old Ke sat in front of his door, with worries and concerns filling up his mind.

It was the same routine as last time, all needed to gather together before setting off, and it was required to sing the song.

When Shao Xuan came back from his first hunting trip, he paid attention to learn the Song of Hunting, so this time he was not pretending to sing it.

The Shaman glimpsed in Shao Xuan's direction while they were singing, so as to confirm that he was not pretending to sing as he did during last time. The Shaman was quite satisfied.

However, even if the Shaman did not stare at him, Shao Xuan already drew much more attention from people.

All warriors present were standing in the units of their hunting groups. Last time, Shao Xuan was standing beside Lang Ga, while this time, he was standing with Tuo and Keke.

Naturally the other warriors knew Tuo and Keke's position, and that was why they were so surprised.

That was the advance group! Did the kid Ah-Xuan himself ask to join? Why would the team leader agree on that?!



Certainly, many people were envious of Shao Xuan's position, especially the newly-recruited warriors. They all awakened at the same batch, but when they were still in training, Shao Xuan had entered the hunting team. Now when, they could finally be recruited into the hunting team, they found that Shao Xuan was already in the advance group! Soon enough, all their jaws seemed to fall down on the ground out of shock.

Even Mao, who was considered as the biggest talent this year, was not brought into the advance group by his own dad, how could Shao Xuan be selected?

The warriors did not know what the team leader was thinking, but it did not stop them from lecturing their own kids. Sai, for instance, got schooled pretty hard by his old man again.

Ah-Fei was not with the team this time. When Shao Xuan came back from the hunting mission, he kicked Ah-Fei's ass and broke a few of his ribs. Ah-Fei lay in his bed for almost ten days, and when he could finally get out of the door, he was beaten up by Mao. Shao Xuan held back some strength, for he worried that Ah-Fei's families might mess around with Old Ke, but Mao had his dad and grandpa on his back, hence he was more ruthless. So, with last time's wounds not completely healed, Ah-Fei was kicked down to the ground again. Now, he was still resting at home. Naturally he was not able to tag along.

People also knew that Ah-Fei started the trouble, so none of them interfered with Shao Xuan and Mao's revenge.

Also, the team leader requested that Ah-Fei and his father stayed at home, so they could reflect on it.

Even healthy warriors might not be able to tag along with the hunting mission every time, for there were rules about who could go and who couldn't. All group leaders would report the name list in their hunting group, for the team leader to decide. So whoever couldn't pass the team leader's final check had better be calm and stay at home.

What? Not enough food stored?

Then you should starve! No starving meant no lesson learnt!

Being the team leader, Ta already knew that the hunting result of his team was not as good as the other team's. Of course he would not endure someone ridiculous to hold the team back, and give reasons to other people to make fun of him.

This year, he used Ah-Fei and his father as an example during all hunting missions. With Ah-Fei's example as a warning, the new warriors tagging along would better behave themselves.

When they walked down along the Path of Glory, the people on both sides were extremely excited, especially those women whose husbands and sons were in the hunting team. They were roaring like hell.

Shao Xuan looked at them, and he felt that those women were competing with their volumes. Some of them even fought each other while yelling. It was such a fine example of the people's savage characters. In the tribe, there's a tradition that all problems could be solved by violence.

When they got to the mountain foot area, Shao Xuan spotted Old Ke on Caesar's back in the crowd. He waved at them, and then left with the hunting team.

With last time's experiences, it was not hard for Shao Xuan to cope with the pace. When they left the Path of Glory, they started to speed up, and left the tribe's residential area behind. They ran faster and faster, but no one was left behind. Apparently all the newly-awakened warriors had trained well in the past few days.

When they left the patrolling area of the tribe, Ta told the team to stop and take a break before they enter the woods.

Shao Xuan wondered what he should do later, but after paying attention to Ta's words for a while, he realized that he had no task at all. The others all had their tasks assigned, and it was pretty clear who was about to handle which direction after they entered the forests. However, Shao Xuan had one thing to do, which was being at Ta's side and not be a burden.

Shao Xuan acknowledged the fact that he was not as strong as the others, so he just glimpsed at those who laughed at him for "still needing the protection" without refuting any of them.

Tuo kicked on those who were laughing at Shao Xuan. The team leader was distributing assignments to other group leaders and paid no attention to their side, so some of the warriors became bolder. If no one stopped them, they might cross the line.

“Just ignore them. Perhaps you will beat them after about a decade.” Tuo consoled him.

“It doesn’t matter.” Shao Xuan looked at the few people who were still sneering, and then turned to Tuo, “Is the advance group going to hunt for ferocious beasts that are more fierce and vicious?”

Tuo was stunned at the question, and then said something profound, “Who told you that the things that we hunt for are all beasts or ferocious beasts?”

# Chapter 71 – Continue on

---

Translated by Sunyancai

If not the beasts or ferocious beasts, then what would they be hunting?

Shao Xuan was perplexed, but before he had the time to raise any questions, Ta came over.

Since they were the advance group, naturally they needed to set out earlier than the other hunting groups, in order to explore the way.

“Okay, is everybody ready to go?” Ta called on the warriors in the advance group, and when they were about to move, Ta turned to Shao Xuan, “Can you keep up with me? Just don’t force it. The advance group is not like other hunting groups such as Mai’s.”

Ta meant that the advance group would be much faster in the speed, and he probably could lend a hand to help him out a little if Shao Xuan could not keep abreast with the others.

“Not yet. I guess I should first give it a try.” Shao Xuan had no idea about the speed of the advance group. Although he thought that he could do it, he decided not to be overconfident. What if it turned out that he could not keep up with the others? He would be the one who suffering from his own words.

Ta kept quiet at Shao Xuan’s response, and led the warriors into the forest after giving the signal to other group leaders by gesticulations. In the blink of an eye, over forty warriors disappeared in the verdant mountain forests.

Finally, Shao Xuan knew what it was like to be part of the advance group. Ta said that the advance group was not like other hunting groups. Shao Xuan now

realized that it was like comparing a normal electric cars with a motorcycle in full speed. He barely had the time to pay attention to the surroundings.

Fortunately, Shao Xuan made fast progress these days. His speed was really faster compared with when he had just awakened, or else he might literally fall behind of the advance group.

They needed to sweep over this place in a short period of time, to detect whether there were any ferocious beasts that might be dangerous to the warriors, or any other variable factors. Every member in the advance group had gone towards their planned destination, so when the forty-member group entered, they broke up the whole into parts and disappeared in a second. Shao Xuan could only see Ta and another warrior named Ah-Suo, who was almost the same age as Tuo and Keke.

Aside from Shao Xuan, the others were doing the scouting in a two-warrior team. Surely they already knew the place that they were going to scout.

After running for some time, Ta stopped at their rendezvous point. Later on, the other warriors would come to this place for reunion after they finished exploring.

“Ah-Suo, you take care of him in here while I scout.” Ta left right after he said that.

The only reason that Shao Xuan managed to follow them here was because Ta slowed down a little bit. He ordered Ah-Suo to stay with Shao Xuan, so that he would be able to survive if there were any ferocious beasts. Meanwhile, Ta had to use the time to scout the region that he designated to himself.

Ah-Suo was quite close with Tuo, but he did not appreciate Shao Xuan that much. Before they entered the forest, he was one of the people mocking at the kid. How could a newly-awakened warrior be of any help? Based on the main leader’s description, it seemed that this kid was more like a mascot. He was nothing but a lucky charm, and now someone had to stay with him for protection all along. Ah-Suo despised that at heart, and deep down he prayed, hoping that this kid would not hold them back like Ah-Fei did.

When Ta had left, Ah-Suo paid attention to the surroundings. Since they entered the woods, he had not bothered to look at Shao Xuan.

It was very quiet, and the cry of birds and animals could be heard constantly. Originally Ah-Suo was prepared that Shao Xuan might be chatty and ask some stupid questions. However, after waiting for quite some time, Ah-Suo heard no questions, even no sound was made. When he first joined the advance group, he had been curious about everything for a pretty long time. Most people would try to ask more questions whenever possible. Shao Xuan was literally the first one that kept his silence like that.

Ah-Suo couldn't help but take a quick glimpse at Shao Xuan when he pretended to view the surrounding situation. Quickly he looked away, but after some hesitation, he looked back again at Shao Xuan.

Even though Ta did not run on full speed since he entered the forest, the speed was much faster than the other hunting groups. Being a warrior who had just been awakened this year, it was pretty difficult for him to keep up with the team without help from the others. Back then when Ah-Suo himself first tagged along with the advance group, he did not ask for any help either, but it took him quite some time to catch his breath while waiting at the rendezvous point. He barely recovered from the fatigue after the warriors arrived at the rendezvous point. However, Shao Xuan was merely a little short of breath. He was not even sweating! Standing there, he still had the energy to keep guard at the surroundings, as if he was not exhausted from the running at all.

Was he really a junior warrior who just awakened this year? And he came from the orphan cave down the mountain?

"Aren't you tired?!" Ah-Suo was totally stunned.

Seeing Ah-Suo's weird glance, Shao Xuan answered, "I'm fine."

In fact, Shao Xuan was taking rapid and short breaths out of fatigue a minute ago, but he recovered fast, and the sweat had dried in the air as well. Feeling the quickly-restored energy inside, Shao Xuan could pull out some strength to pay attention to the environment.

After some careful observation, Ah-Suo realized that this kid was not struggling to act like that at all. That was odd.

Seeing that Ah-Xuan had no intention to ask questions, Ah-Suo felt bored instead. In the past, he would go exploring with Ta, however, now he had to

stay and wait. This place was not so dangerous after all, so they had the luxury to have a conversation.

“Aren’t you curious about what the advance group’s tasks are?” asked Ah-Suo.

“You won’t answer me anyway, so why bother asking...” Shao Xuan had asked before, but Ta, Tuo, and Keke all avoided answering directly. All they told him was, “You will know when it’s time.”

“That was when we were still with the other hunting groups! Of course we wouldn’t tell you then. What if you told the others? The Shaman would hate if too many people knew it...However, now I can tell you if you want to know.” Ah-Suo said proudly.

He assumed that Shao Xuan was somewhat capable, so he was much nicer in attitude. When he resumed the fine attitude, he retained the old habit of his, which was blabbering about the advance group to the new recruits. Answering related questions made him feel proud of himself, especially when seeing the astonished faces of newly-recruited warriors. It felt so good.

“We have our own tasks in the advance group, tasks directly given from the Shaman.” Ah-Suo explained. It was an extremely high honor for them, and during this process, there were benefits as well, “We get to eat the things that are not accessible to the others in the tribe. Also, we can be stronger than the others in the future.”

Shao Xuan endured Ah-Suo’s blabbering for a while, but then he couldn’t help but interrupt, “So what are the tasks exactly?”

Ah-Suo was a little upset for being interrupted while he was soaked in the self-pride, so he hummed, “Do you think that the herbs in the tribe were obtained by people randomly?”

The herbs?!

Shao Xuan had noticed this strange thing since he got the pack of herbs from the Shaman. Although he had no idea what the origin of the herbs was, he could tell that some of them smelled like plants and leaves. He had never seen

anything similar in the past, even during hunting missions.

“So, all the time, you were ‘hunting’ and ‘killing’...plants?”

“Not all the time, but yes.” Said Ah-Suo.

So it was really the plants?!

Shao Xuan was stunned. How could they use words like “hunt” and “kill” for plants?

What kind of plants could they be?!

As they were talking, Shao Xuan heard a vague sound of a whistle from afar. Later on, more whistles appeared from other locations. Some were near, while some weren't. Some of the sounds were even quite far, and could barely be heard only by paying attention closely.

When the whistling sounds stopped, warriors began gathering at the rendezvous point. Ta was the last person here, for he had to go back to deliver the information to the other hunting groups. They could not hear the whistles if they were too far away.

After a short break, Ta led the others to continue the hunting trip.

In the beginning, they were worthily the esteemed advance group. However, later on, they became the herb-collecting team in the tribe, and their tasks were assigned by the Shaman.



# Chapter 72 – Aircraft fleet

---

Translated by Sunyancai

The speed of the advance group became rapid again, and the route was not the one that Shao Xuan knew from before.

They strode at a speed which was almost two to three times faster than the other hunting groups. It was a long process, during which they only had one little break to have something to eat. After that, they kept on marching, and then spent the night in a cave when the night came. It was also the place that Ta and the others had used to rest at during hunting missions.

Shao Xuan indeed was not used to this kind of running during the first day. Even though he was much better than his peers regarding strength, endurance and speed, he was only a junior warrior who awakened this year after all. In the advance group, the weakest warrior was someone only one step away from becoming an intermediate warrior. Shao Xuan could not be comparable with them after all.

So when they finally arrived at the cave to rest on the first night, Shao Xuan was completely exhausted. He laid down there, unable to even lift his feet. All his muscles hurt while twitching, and his brain felt like it was swollen.

The other warriors in the advance group were also tired, but they were already used to it, and the soreness was not the same as Shao Xuan was experiencing now. Looking at Shao Xuan's behavior, they all guessed that this lad could finally see the gap between him and the others. The advance group was not for everyone to join, and those with low ability could never keep up with the crew, even if he used every effort to become a part of the group. However, Shao Xuan was already impressive enough to keep up during his first

day.

So, some of the warriors in the advance group had a better impression of Shao Xuan. In their eyes, Shao Xuan was only a kid, and people in the tribe had a relatively higher tolerance for kids. Ta and the others, ranking top in the advance group already discussed about taking turns to carry Shao Xuan during the next day. After all, it seemed impossible for Shao Xuan to keep running by himself tomorrow.

However, to everyone's surprise, all the others found that Shao Xuan was as good as new when they woke up the next day, early in the morning. Last night, he was struggling to lift his toe, but now he was alive and kicking, as if nothing had happened! He needed no ride from others, and began to keep up energetically.

The warriors in the advance group shared the same facial expression.

Oh my goodness. Was this really the kid from the orphan cave down there?

What had he been dieting on since birth?! Normal beasts? Ferocious beasts? Or even king beasts?

It's just impossible! The food distributed to the orphan cave was normal beast meat and plant tubers, which contained no good energy. How could he grow into such a strong warrior?

They were really puzzled no matter how they scratched their heads.

Milling over it, it was still very mysterious.

Unless, he did have the blessings from the ancestors?!

Hence during the second day's run, people would constantly glance at Shao Xuan while running.

Well, judging from that kid's energetic look, it seemed that he was not faking it!

.....

Unlike the other hunting groups, which would do some hunting before journeying to the next location, the hunting pattern of the advance group was different. Ta led the group to keep running. After spending one night at the

cave, they had to continue to march onward.

Sometimes they had to climb over a mountain while the mountaintop was covered in perennial snow. Sometimes they had to take a detour to some other mountains afar, during which, they had to pass through dangerous regions like swamps and tar pits.

Shao Xuan had seen many nameless ferocious beasts, such as huge fierce ugly beasts and colorful poisonous snakes. Any one of them would raise enough eyebrows if they carried them back on the Path of Glory. However, the group of warriors made no stop at all. Even when they killed something, it would be for food and daily supply. The spare parts would just be tossed away in order not to be their burdens.

March, hunt, and then march, and then hunt again!

They were doing similar things every day. Enormous consumption of physical energy meant more need of energy supplement. The meat from high level beasts was the best supplement.

Originally, the other warriors in the advance group worried that Shao Xuan might be sleepy after dieting on the high level prey's meat, however, it turned out that they were worrying about nothing.

After hunting down a Thorn Black Wind, Shao Xuan had become used to eating high level meat. He had been able to adapt to the food for a long time. In fact, he could absorb the energy from even higher level foods.

Being a newly-awakened warrior that was awakened this year, he ate no less than the others, and had much faster recovery speed. At first, warriors from the advance group were all surprised at Shao Xuan's behavior. But later on, they became less surprised, and then they became totally numb to it. In the end, no one would ever laugh at Shao Xuan anymore.

As expected, no ordinary person would be recruited by the team leader in the advance group.

After five days of continuous journeying, Shao Xuan followed the others to climb up a mountain and entered a cave to rest. They had reached the

destination. But Shao Xuan could not tell the difference, except for a slight odd feeling.

After a night's rest, Shao Xuan was woken up early in the morning. He collected his equipment and followed Ta outside.

They continued to climb up and then stopped at a steep cliff.

The sun rose as time went by.

Shao Xuan stood at the edge of cliff, facing the rising sun. It was a large scale of endless green in his view. There were some other colors mixed in, but ninety-nine percent was green in different shades.

This was the destination of their journey, a kingdom of plants. In the horizon, at the junction between the sky and the endless plant kingdom, the sun was rising.

The chilly air became warmer.

Shao Xuan could clearly feel that everything living on this land was waking up.

Ka, Ka, Ka!

Among this green kingdom of plants, some building tall circular plants were making ka-ka sounds, like heavy wood planks hitting each other. Sometimes there were creaking sounds, as if a giant wooden boat was swaying in the waves.

Together with these sounds, the ends of the circular plants had their originally wound up leaves unwind. The layers of leaves stretched and opened, like flowers blossoming.

The lowered "heads" of the bean-sprout-like giant plants began to raise, and in the face of the sun, they stretched out their huge leaves, like wings.

The sun was rising, and its light had reached the other side of the mountain. Like an alarm clock, it went from one side of the mountain to the world in the other side, to wake up the sleeping creatures.

Shao Xuan took a deep breath. He stepped forward and looked down.

It was merely a cliff, and whoever jumped down would totally be smashed to

pieces.

“How do we go down there?” asked Shao Xuan. If they had to go down eventually, then why did they climb up? The cliff they stood on was basically perpendicular to the ground. It would be very dangerous if they climbed directly down, let alone that no one knew whether they would be attacked by other creatures while climbing down. It was an impossible mission.

“Of course we do not jump!” someone laughed.

“Hey! Look at the lake over there and you’ll know.” Tuo pointed to somewhere in the other direction.

Shao Xuan looked along to where Tuo pointed.

What lake? There was only a lake of darkness.

No!

It was more than that!

Shao Xuan took a closer look, and found that something was moving in the black lake, it was too far for people to notice easily.

Sure enough, the black lake was not as calm as before, and it began to spread out.

Numerous black dots rose up. At first there were only a few of them, but after several breaths, dense black patches began to rise up in the air.

And the lake, which was covered by those black dots, finally revealed itself in Shao Xuan’s sight.

It was an open lake and there seemed to be a lot of plants of different colors inside. Yellow, green, brown, red...many colors mixed in the pool, and together with the shape of the pool, it was like a pair of compound eyes, like those of some insect.

The mountain on the other side was much higher than the one Shao Xuan was standing at, and it poked right into the sky.

Those rising black dots did not fly upwards, but flew in their direction, as if a ball of dancing black cloud.

“Get ready, everyone!!” Ta said to the crew and then to Shao Xuan, “You follow me, Ah-Xuan!”

The black cloud approached and Shao Xuan could basically hear the wings flapping, and he finally saw what those black dots were.

Dragonflies?!

Just before, they were too far away to identify, but now, Shao Xuan’s heart was fluttering like hell, seeing that it was a group of dragonflies.

Shao Xuan had seen dragonflies before, but not in this size and quantity!

It was a huge aircraft fleet!

The small ones had wingspans of at least three meters, while most of them had wingspans of five meters! Some of them were even bigger, while numerous giant dragonflies were flying towards them in large numbers. Obviously Shao Xuan was looking at something he had never seen before.

They were going to take them from one side of the mountain to the other side, where the green kingdom of plants was located.

When the “aircraft fleet” flew above their heads, Shao Xuan could see the reticulate veins in their wings.

They were like gliders!

“Let’s go!”

With the favorable terrain, warriors in the advance group leaped down the cliff and landed on the backs of dragonflies.

Before Shao Xuan had the chance to move, he was lifted by Ta and landed on a big dragonfly’s back.

For the first time in his life, Shao Xuan experienced the giant dragonfly flight.

# Chapter 73 – Feeling small

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Those giant dragonflies were gentle in temper, or else they would not allow the warriors in the advance group to take a ride on their backs.

Judging from the behavior of the advance group, Shao Xuan knew that this was not the first time that they used this way to go down the mountain. Also, perhaps those giant dragonflies also had vague memories about the people. However, according to Ta's theory, the dragonflies do not mind taking the others for a free ride, as long as you do not actively irritate or attack them on purpose.

Viewing from the backs of dragonflies, the forests below seemed to be quite calm and peaceful. Of course that was merely an illusion. The place was even more dangerous than the forests that Shao Xuan had crossed during his last hunting mission.

The law of the jungle also applied in here. The competition for sunlight and nutrition was quite fierce in some places with dense trees. Often, Shao Xuan would see some withered trees. Their roots were large and deep, which were obviously hundreds of years old. They had twisted roots and gnarled branches, but also very dead. There was no worm holes, no cracks on the trunks, but the tree had still died. Ta told Shao Xuan that those were 'killed' by the joint efforts of the other trees nearby.

The battlefield of the plants was both above and below the surface. If you peeled the surface away, you could see that the roots of the dead trees had all been strangled by the roots of other trees.

“Attention! Prepare to get off!” Ta warned Shao Xuan.

They could not keep following the group of dragonflies, for they had a different destination. After a short ride, they had to go on separate ways.

The group of dragonflies was quite large, and the forty warriors in the advance group were not together. Even if they started the ride almost at the same time, they got separated after the dragonflies changed their flying formation later. Soon they could not see each other.

“Now! Jump!”

Shao Xuan had no time to react, because he was lifted by Ta and he jumped down together with him.

The landing position that Ta chose was a giant plant that stood there like a tall building. They landed on a huge leaf near the top, for the soft leaf helped remove most of the impact. Also, Ta jumped while the dragonfly was flying low, so they weren't hurt.

It was a safe landing, and Shao Xuan finally got to stand on his own feet.

The leaf beneath his feet felt cold, but not slippery.

The other warriors in the air were also trying to find suitable landing spots, and constantly jumped down too.

“Let's go.”

Ta told Shao Xuan to follow. This time, he let go of Shao Xuan. But since he promised the Shaman that he would bring Shao Xuan back safe and sound, he needed to keep an eye on him all the time.

“Guard the surroundings and be react quickly.” Ta reminded him.

“Okay.” Shao Xuan followed behind Ta, jumping down to other leaves beneath them. They had to move from the top to the bottom, while being careful not to slip and fall.

Only the top one third of the plant was covered by leaves, and the other two third of the plant was only a thick stem.

Ta slowed down on purpose, and Shao Xuan closely followed him, sliding



down along the stem.

It was not as bright near the ground as it was on the top. There were too many plants, and the dense branches blocked most of the sunlight. Only some of the sunlight reached the ground. Apparently the lower part was more shady and cool, but the light was enough for Shao Xuan to clearly see the surroundings.

Shao Xuan had a feeling that he became smaller in here, or in other words, the world became larger in size.

He had seen a lot of ancient trees and big ferocious beasts during his last hunting trip, but he did not feel himself to be as small like now.

Even the mushrooms were the size of cabins. How could anyone not feel small?

Ta whistled, with his back closely leaning against the stem of the plant. It was a signal for the warriors in the advance group to come together.

Unlike other deer-like or bird-like whistles of the other hunting groups, the whistle was lower in tone. It was especially designed for this place.

Soon enough, similar whistle sounds came from afar. It was hard to capture if you didn't pay enough attention.

Shao Xuan looked aside, and found some thin straw-like vine stretching towards him rapidly.

Shao Xuan and Ta both stood in the direction it was moving towards, but Shao Xuan had a clear instinct that those vines were targeting him, and him only.

Whoosh!

A small stone knife stabbed the ground, after it had chopped down the tip of the stretching vine.

Immediately the vine stopped stretching towards them, and instead of moving forward, it quickly withdrew as if being scared.

Ta went over to retrieve the stone knife, as he said to Shao Xuan, "Do not

treat them as lifeless objects, or you will be the one who is dead. Also, most of them know a thing or two about attacking the weak and keeping away from the strong. You are the weakest warrior in our group.”

Terrific. Now he was the target again.

In the mountain forests, ferocious beasts would attack the children of other species, while in here, even plants knew the rules to attack the weak, and keep away from the strong.

Shao Xuan had heard from others in his last life, that even plants had the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. It's just most people did not pay attention to that. While now, Shao Xuan had a deep understanding about the amplified five senses of plants.

Soon, warriors that had landed in different spots gathered together. After a quick headcount, Ta ordered them to go on. This time, they were divided into two smaller groups, and they split up, to finish the tasks assigned by the Shaman.

So, there were only twenty warriors in Shao Xuan's group.

It was impossible for the warriors in the advance group to know every inch of the land, given that it was such a vast green area. However, they knew how to identify the directions. As long as there was sunlight, they wouldn't get lost, as the route was basically unchanged.

The sounds of birds and insects could be heard in the woods. Also, there were various sounds made by some plants. Some of them sounded like knockings on a door, and the sound echoed in the woods. Some sound would even make Shao Xuan think of the rotation of an iron head wedged on a mast. [ED: WTH kind of sound is that LMAO]

Shao Xuan saw many kinds of dangerous and even lethal plants as he followed Ta while running through the woods. One second earlier it was all quiet and calm, while a second later it was a blood-soaked scene.

Shao Xuan had once seen a plant hunt. Its originally smooth leaves could rapidly turn into saws and blades, and chop down the animals or plants in its territory into pieces. It would bury their remains into the ground, so as to

provide the nutrition it needed to grow.

Some plants would even eat the meat directly. There were some like the Drosera or Nepenthes that Shao Xuan had seen in his last life. Some of the plants turned out to be more ferocious, and they would attack aggressively. Warriors in the advance group would normally try to avoid them. They were not easy to mess with.

“Let’s take a break. Tuo and Keke, you two go fetch some water.” Ta said after a half day’s march.

The thing required by the Shaman was not around here, and they had to keep running for some time to get there.

There was no river or stream nearby. As Shao Xuan was confused about Ta’s command, he saw Tuo and Keke go to a plant with thick leaves. They slashed on the stem with their stone swords, and they finally made a thin crack after quite a few strikes. The outer layer of the stem was very thick. The crack would be too thin if they only struck once, and it would soon heal its wound.

Light green liquid poured out from the crack, with a pale sweet fragrance. Tuo and Keke used some containers to collect the liquid.

That liquid would attract other insects. Aside from Shao Xuan, and Tuo and Keke who were collecting the liquid, the others were guarding against the approaching insects. Every insect who came could only die here. Some of the warriors guarded for the sky, while others guarded the other directions in the woods. With the deployed guarding formation, only two warriors were spared to collect the water eventually.

“Toss me your container, Ah-Xuan!” Tuo said as he collected the liquid.

Tuo did not ask Shao Xuan to approach that plant, so he stayed at the place about ten meters away. At Tuo’s words, Shao Xuan tossed him the emptied gourd.

When it was filled, Tuo tossed the gourd back to Shao Xuan, and continued to fill in the other container that the next warrior tossed him.

The light green liquid attracted many insects, and most of them were pretty large. Any random bug was over a meter long.

“Hurry!” Ta rushed them.

Afar, there were a bunch of bugs flying towards their direction. With only twenty of them, they could not fight against those bugs.

When the last container was filled, that group of bugs was about two hundred meters away from them. It was enough for them to leave.

“Go!”

Naturally they left since they were done with the filling.

“What are they?” After considerable distance, Shao Xuan asked as they were standing on a leaf, resting.

“We call them the tearers. You see the plant that provided us water earlier? It’s wound would soon be healed, and there would be no more crack. The liquid that poured out would be soon reabsorbed and protected by a thick layer. Most insects could do nothing about it. They would leave if there was no more fragrance distributed. However, the tearers are no normal insects. That plant will probably die since there are tearers approaching.” Tuo said.

The insect called the tearer was some creature that was worthy of its name. It had sharp forelimbs like blades to use for tearing. It was a bug that dieted on both meat and plants. The liquid of plants and the blood of animals were both delicacies for the tearers, and they often went in groups.

Warriors in the advance group did not wish to confront the tearers. One reason was that the tearers were too lethal, while the other reason was that they stank. The disgusting smell wouldn’t fade even after they finished the hunting mission if they were stained with it.

# Chapter 74 – The Jumping Fruit Tree

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan felt very comfortable after drinking that liquid in his gourd. It was cool and refreshing, as if it had driven away the fatigue of the long march. His mind was cleared, and the bones in his body were about to shake out of pleasure.

“How’s that? Feeling good?” Ah-Suo tossed Shao Xuan a fruit, and added, “This is not bad, either.”

Shao Xuan had no idea what kind of plant was edible, so he did not touch anything. A moment earlier when they were fetching the water, he noticed that Ah-Suo and some other warriors took a detour. It turned out that they were collecting fruits.

“These are all fine stuff!” Ah-Suo explained, “I’m not exaggerating, anyone who eats this will make faster progress than others. You know, there’s a saying in our advance group.”

In a lower voice, Ah-Suo continued, “Only those in the advance group are able to become senior totem warriors. Every single senior totem warrior had served in the advance group for some time.”

Most of the plants in here were hundreds of years old. So their liquid and fruits could benefit human’s physiques by enriching the marrow and washing the bones. Even if warriors could not tell the exact effect, they could experience the changes in their bodies, and confirm the benefits brought by the things they ate.

“Can’t we take them back to the tribe?” asked Shao Xuan.

“It’s not that easy!” Ah-Suo had his face twisted, “I wanted to bring some back to my brothers and sisters, but it was just not possible.”

The advance group together with the team leaders had been trying for generations. Some tried to freeze the plants, while the others tried to take the plant out with the same dirt covering its roots. They tried all possible ways, but none worked. As long as they were brought outside, they would soon rot or decay after one or two days. What if they were dried in the sun? The method was not applicable for all the plants.

“Until today, there are only a few kinds that can be brought out. Our tasks assigned by the Shaman were to bring those back. It’s just that some of those plants are not easy to be found. It depends on the timing. Some flowers or fruits only exist once a year, while some rare creatures had even no regular pattern. Sometimes you wouldn’t be able to see its flower even if you waited there for your whole life. It was all fated.”

Shao Xuan was speechless.

It seemed that the plants here would only bear fruits after hundreds of years, or only those rare fruits had the certain efficacy. Meanwhile, more plants would immediately die once they were uprooted, for they could not grow in other places. Perhaps, some people had tried to plant them long time before, but never succeeded. So that until now, warriors in the tribe could only come to this promising but dangerous land in person.

It was the advance group’s honor to serve the tribe. The herbs that the Shaman mixed to heal the illnesses and injuries were all brought back by the advance group. No one could deny their contribution to the tribe.

Aside from the honor, being a part of the advance group meant that one could taste many medicinal plants which could not be brought outside. It was very good for the warrior’s development and progress.

Because of that, those who withdrew from the advance group due to aging or wounds would tell their sons or grandsons to try their best, in order to have the chance to join the advance group. They knew that those warriors in the advance group would only become more and more powerful, as they were considered as a group of elites with the most potential.

However, now the inner rule of the tribe was that all positions of the advance group should be determined by the team leader. Normally, the Shaman had no say in that. In fact, the Shaman would only pay attention to some special cases such as Shao Xuan.

Most of the times, the team leader would select someone that he was close with, as long as the candidate was qualified enough. Those warriors would also be the supporters of the team leader for when he campaigns for the Chief's position later.

As for those who got selected in the advance group...who would think about withdrawing once they had a taste of the benefits?

No one would.

One more warrior in meant that someone might be kicked out from the advance group. Even if the team leader had the absolute power, he was constrained by the law set by the ancestors. There was a rule that the scale of the advance group must be controlled, and its members must be less than one fifth of the hunting team. Perhaps the team leader who made the rule had suffered from some kind of a consequence, so he persuaded the Chief and the Shaman to set the rule.

Thinking about that, Shao Xuan realized why he received so many subtle looks when he joined the advance group. The others were not only doubting his ability, they were thinking of him as a potential competitor.

Also, Shao Xuan had noticed that most of the warriors in the advance group lived in the mountaintop. There were only a few of them who lived in the mountain side.

Were people like Mai unqualified to be selected into the advance group? Definitely not! However, Mai could not be a part of the advance group unless the team leader permitted it.

There was no absolute fairness. Even Shao Xuan's entering was nothing but a coincidence. He was brought in because Ta thought he was blessed by the ancestors, while Ta's hunting team was not doing good these days. If not for the blessing of the ancestors, kids like Shao Xuan would not have the chance at all. He was a kid from the orphan cave, and after he was awakened, he learnt the

trap skills from old Ke! Ta had no appreciation for that. Shao Xuan would've been totally shut out from the advance group, unless he turned out to be a real talent and elite in the future.

There was a growing gulf between the strong and the weak. The development in the mountaintop and the mountain foot districts must've been the preconceived plan of the ancestors. When people in the mountain foot district thought about how to obtain more food, the others in the mountaintop probably were wondering about how to gain more strength.

When there's no threat from the other tribe, naturally there's internal strife. Some were sidelined, but it was just not obvious on the surface.

Shao Xuan looked around after having another few sips of the liquid in his gourd. The terrain was relatively high and Shao Xuan could see some plants in weird shapes.

"What is that?" Shao Xuan pointed at something afar and asked Ah-Suo

Ah-Suo glimpsed at that direction and shared a meaningful sneer, "That is call the human head tree. Every one of them had eaten at least one human head!"

Shao Xuan said nothing, but he was not frightened either. He just stared at those trees. No wonder it was called the human head tree. It looked like a head, and there was even long 'hair' dancing in the wind. However, he did not buy the story of eating a human head or something.

Ah-Suo felt a little bored seeing that Shao Xuan was not scared, but he continued, "It's a shame that now there's no flower on the top. When the flowers blossom on top of the human head tree, it would be really beautiful, as big flowers covered the whole tree."

Shao Xuan was speechless again.

According to Ah-Suo's description, Shao Xuan pictured the scene in his mind. However, he did not think it would be beautiful if he saw a giant human head covered in giant flowers.

"Ahead, we'll reach the spot where the jumping fruit trees grow. You should



keep your distance later. Just do not come near.” Said Ah-Suo.

“Got it.” Shao Xuan was not someone without self-knowledge.

After a short break, Ta indicated that they should go for the Jumping Fruit Trees.

Further ahead, the density of the trees was not as thick as before. People could see the scene in front of them without standing on a high terrain.

The jumping fruit trees that Ah-Suo said looked like giant weeping willows. However, the difference was that along every drooping branch, there were a lot of circular fruits the size of an adult’s fist.

Seeing that everyone had silenced their breathing, Shao Xuan reduced his own sense of presence. He thought that perhaps that tree was especially sensitive to sounds.

Ta raised his hand to point at Shao Xuan, and then opened his palm to press the air. He was indicating Shao Xuan to stay there, right behind the trunk.

Shao Xuan nodded to say that he got it. However, he felt that something bad was about to happen. He wanted to say something as warning, but with other warriors waiting for Ta’s order, Ta had no time for Shao Xuan at all.

Looking around, Ta waved his hand. About twenty warriors immediately rushed towards the tree like lightning. They were running on their toes, as no sound was made, yet the speed was fast enough. They were surrounding the tree.

However, just when they got near the jumping fruit tree, Shao Xuan heard Ta make a quick shout, “Withdraw!”

The others had no hesitation, even when some warriors almost reached the jumping fruit tree. All of them withdrew quickly at Ta’s command. While some of the fruits, which were tightly grown on the branches earlier, promptly dislocated themselves from the tree. As if running for their lives, the fruits rushed out and fled.

Shao Xuan had no idea what had happened. He saw Ta running back with the others, and the next second, he was lifted up by Ta.

They were running very fast, as if dodging something. Shao Xuan looked back as he was lifted by Ta. He found that some things in the air were flying their way.

The wind grew stronger, and the things in the air reduced the distance with the warriors.

Shao Xuan was brought up to some tall plant. Warriors were divided into five-people groups, and two of the groups tried hard to pull the thick leaves together as shields. They created a small enclosed space with the leaves. When they were pulling, Shao Xuan heard the sound of cracking as if thick wooden planks were being folded.

At the last moment when the leaves were folding, Shao Xuan finally saw what the things in the air were. They were like dandelions, with 'soft white hairs'. It's just that the white hairs were much longer. Each one was about two palm's length.

They densely filled the air, and flew everywhere in the sky as well as in the woods. From afar there came 'poof' sounds.

When all the leaves met each other, it became very dark inside. Not much light was able to pierce through the thick leaves. The visions of the warriors became vague.

It was very tense in this enclosed space, and Shao Xuan could hear people's intense breathing. It seemed that it consumed them a lot of energy running there.

Not only the others, Shao Xuan smelled the danger as well. His eyelids twitched hard, while he couldn't help but raise his head.

As he was thinking, Shao Xuan heard 'poof' sounds around them. With those sounds, numerous white hairs pierced through the thick leaves as if they were thorns. One of the furs was only half an inch away from Shao Xuan's eyes.

# Chapter 75 – White hairs

---

Translated by Sunyancai

A drop of cold sweat slipped down from Shao Xuan's forehead.

If he had not raised his head, would one of his eyes have been stabbed?

Undoubtedly, it seemed to be some harmless white fur, yet they could pierce through the thick leaves and pierce themselves into the enclosed space. If the leaves weren't that thick and the white fur pierced right inside, Shao Xuan would have been wounded anyway, even if he had moved his head.

No wonder Ah-Suo and the others mentioned that it was more than dangerous in this place, and carelessness meant death sometimes.

Thinking about earlier when they were besieging the jumping fruit tree, Shao Xuan realized that if any warrior had hesitated when withdrawing, he would totally have become a white haired hedgehog, for there would've been no chance for him to arrive at the shelter in time. There was no suitable object that could be used as a shelter anywhere near the jumping fruit tree.

Shao Xuan smelled some blood in the air, which meant that some warrior was hurt. However, there was no scream at all. everyone's breathing was regular, except for two people, who were breathing faster than the others.

After a while, Ta said, "You go out and check, Ah-Suo."

"Okay."

Ah-Suo opened a crack between the two leaves, and checked outside, "We can go out now."

"Open it." Ta told the others to open the enclosed leaves.

Ka, ka, ka!

There were sounds like cracking wooden planks, and their vision became brighter with the light.

The white fur that almost wounded Shao Xuan's eye was not the only one that had pierced through the leaves. There were quite a lot of them, some were pierced deep while the others were not that deep. The blood that Shao Xuan smelled came from the hands of two warriors.

Since they had to pull the leaves together with their bare hands, their hands would be the first to bear the brunt. When not lucky enough, they would bleed because of the pierced white fur.

Five warriors were pulling the leaves, while two of them were wounded. It was already a good circumstance.

However, the white fur carried poison on its tip, and the poison would cause long-term anticoagulation. Even if it was only a small wound, warriors still couldn't heal and stop the bleeding by relying on their own healing ability. Those two warriors who were wounded already had numb arms. The others quickly poured the light green liquid from the gourds on their wounds. Later on, the wounds stopped bleeding.

"How are the others?" Ta asked.

"We have three people injured. Who else has the water? Come here!" a warrior from the other plant shouted out.

"We're good in here! Only one was hurt!"

All of them were busy dealing with the wounded people, and Shao Xuan contributed some of the liquid in his gourd as well.

Seeing the surroundings, Shao Xuan couldn't help but gasp in horror.

The whole place was filled with white hairs. In some places there were more hairs, while in some places there weren't that many of them. However, the attacking range of the white hairs was quite large, thanks to which it also cost the lives of some insects and birds. white hairs could be seen all over the giant trees, plants, and vines.

Such a wide range of indiscriminate attack could only be considered as a devastating disaster.

There were not many giant animals in the woods, for giant figures equaled to giant targets. In this place ruled by the plants, giant animals had relatively less advantages. Even ferocious beasts such as the Thorn Black Wind, they probably would not have the ability to survive in here. So, aside from little animals or insects such as the giant dragonflies and the tearers, that could well adapt to the environment, other animals would keep their distance away from this land. After all, the indiscriminate attack's lethality was too big, and the one that Shao Xuan just experienced was merely one of those attacks.

On the ground, there was a one-meter bird with a huge beak. It got stabbed by two white hairs, and was flapping its wings powerlessly. However, the flapping did it no good, for all his muscles were becoming numb, and it could not control its talons.

Whoosh!

A blood-colored vine reached out from the tall bushes and rolled the bird over before dragging it back. The bird struggled fiercely, but it was of no avail.

In the end, the vine and the bird both disappeared in the depth of the bushes, and only sounds of flapping could be heard.

Then there was a slight 'puff' sound.

Then it was all quiet again.

Since they entered the woods, Shao Xuan had seen no remains of any creature. So it seemed that perhaps there were a lot of "cleaners" in these woods, that could drag away all those dead or disabled creatures, and then digest them into nourishment

"Let's take a break, we'll hunt for those jumping fruits later." Ta said to everyone.

The rain of white hairs was a large scale of attack, it had driven away most of the threatening creatures. At least for a short period of time, no invasive herds

such as the tearers could be seen in this district. That was also the reason why Ta told the warriors to rest for a bit.

“Only the little tip of the white fur is poisonous.” Tuo explained as he was treating the wound on a warrior’s palm. He pulled out the white fur, which was stabbed deep into the warrior’s hand, and presented it to Shao Xuan.

“They are not that dangerous now, as long as you do not touch the poisonous tip.” Said Tuo.

Shao Xuan gently pinched the palm-long white hair with his thumb and index finger as he observed it closely. It was a little thicker than a man’s hair, and very light in weight. The poisonous part was only on the tip, where there was a tiny cap in the shape of an arrowhead. The poison was contained in there.

Those white hairs looked soft, and indeed, they felt soft, too. However, they could pierce through thick objects in a moment like needles. Obviously they moved very quickly when they were flying out in the wind. Before they into the enclosed space made by the leaves, Shao Xuan had seen some things like the dandelions. They were formed by those white hairs.

After experiencing the white hairs’ tenacity, Shao Xuan pulled out a stone knife to cut off the poison cap on its tip. However, he found that normal cuts could not remove the poison cap at all. He had to keep cutting back and forth, and only by doing that could he successfully remove the poison cap.

Unexpectedly, such a thin hair was so hard to cut.

“Chi.... Ha-ha-ha!”

“It’s killing me, hey, look at that stupid kid!”

“Ah-Xuan, you can’t play with everything, understand? I’ll do you a favor and find you a vine if you want to play with ropes.”

“New warriors tend to think simple, and they all assume everything’s easy.”

“You are still too young to understand the things.”

The other warriors resting nearby couldn’t help but burst out into laughter. They felt like they were watching a comedy as they were watching Shao Xuan cut the white fur with the stone knife seriously. So, they decided to lecture Shao

Xuan with a tone like the elders.

“Ah-Xuan, you see those white hairs are soft and thin, right? But in fact, they are very difficult to cut, and they’ll all disappear after ten days.” Said Tuo.

“I see...” Shao Xuan was not embarrassed by being mocked at all. Instead, he was more and more interested in the white hair.

Since now the team leader told them to take a break, Shao Xuan had nothing else to do. He pulled out quite a few white hairs pierced into the ground, and placed them together with all the poisonous tips on one end.

“What are you doing? Still want to play with it?” Keke was too curious, so he came to ask.

Shao Xuan did not answer right away, but he asked, “Can I make a fire in here?”

“No bonfire.” Keke shook his head hard, “The trees and grass nearby are not fond of fire. We won’t make a fire even when we spend the night in here. Otherwise we’d be attacked by the trees.”

“What about a torch?” Shao Xuan asked.

“Only the small ones.” Seeing that Shao Xuan was only making a small fire, Keke was relieved at once.

Ta was standing beside them, with a roll of animal skin in his hands. It had all the targets that they were trying to find in it. He looked up at Shao Xuan’s direction at the noise, but instantly he frowned. Ta did not expect that Shao Xuan would still think about playing with those little tricks after he invited him into the advance force!

Yes, in Ta’s perspective, all things related to traps and snares were considered as little tricks. Those were supposed to be performed by the weak and the disabled people. He had no appreciation for that. In his mind, a true noble warrior would just fight with his own ability, and real hunting meant slaying the prey by sword and spear! Aside from the real way, the ones performing the little tricks would never become real warriors.

He felt more unsatisfied as he thought about it. Seeing that Keke was helping

Shao Xuan find a branch for the torch, Ta made a heavy humph.

Since the team leader showed this attitude, the others who planned to check on Shao Xuan's deeds all had second thoughts. The team leader was the one who could determine their fate in the advance group. Why would they do something pointless to upset the team leader? Ah-Xuan was just a stupid kid who was invited by the team leader. Now he was still thinking about playing? Why bother?

Keke found a dead tree nearby, so he cut off a branch and lit a fire.

Shao Xuan used the fire to burn the end of the poison caps.

The white fur was blackened quickly when burnt, and it shrank fast as the ends rolled up. Shao Xuan burnt more from that poisonous end, just in case.

"Please help me with this."

Shao Xuan passed the torch to Keke, and then took out a small stone knife. He put the patch of burnt white hairs on the trunk aside, and used the stone knife to stroke them.

The burnt end rolled up in a ball, was directly dislocated from the white hairs, since Shao Xuan used the knife to stroke along them. Meanwhile, only nontoxic white hairs remained in Shao Xuan's hand.



# Chapter 76 – Playing a small role

---

Translated by Sunyancai

“What?”

Seeing that Shao Xuan literally removed the poison caps on the white hairs, Keke couldn't help but shout out “what”. Also, he used a pitched tone, showing his astonishment.

The other resting warriors all became quite curious by Keke's “what”. They felt like there was a cat scratching their hearts, for not knowing what exactly happened. They wanted to take a look, but were afraid to be despised by the team leader. All they could do was to sit there in silence, while staring in Shao Xuan's direction.

Unfortunately, Keke was a big fellow, who blocked everyone's sight completely. The crowd wanted to swing a hammer on his head. You just observe closely all you want, but why block the sight of others?

Tuo did not mind it. He arrived at Keke's side and squatted after he had taken care of the wounded warrior. He watched Shao Xuan being busy.

In fact, Shao Xuan was merely experimenting. Even though those white hairs were not easy to cut, they were still plants, so they were supposed to be afraid of fire. Unexpectedly, it worked.

Looking at the white hairs of different length in his hand, Shao Xuan twiddled his fingers.

Keke saw Shao Xuan take out two white hairs, and with his fingers twisting and turning, those two white hairs became tightly entwined with each other. In

a short period of time, Shao Xuan connected all the white hairs without poison caps together into a long thread. It was nearly two meters long, and it felt elastic if you dragged it.

“Eeeh~~?!”

Keke’s “Eeeh” was much louder, and the rising tone was also higher.

The others sitting aside felt even more uncomfortable, for they were being tortured by their curiosity. Some of the warriors felt an itch to slap Keke sideways.

What the fuck! Why can’t you roll over and look from afar?!

However, the crowd dare not to tempt the team leader’s fury, and they remained sitting where they were.

Ah-Suo wanted to go and look, to check out what Shao Xuan was playing with. However, he had just taken one step, before he found that the team leader was glaring at him. He had no choice but to step back. Since he wasn’t not able to go closer, Ah-Suo picked up a chunk of dirt beside his feet, and tossed it towards Keke.

Bang!

The dirt bulk hit on Keke’s back, and immediately got scattered.

Keke totally ignored that dirt chunk. He was very curious seeing Shao Xuan turn the white hairs into a long elastic thread. He knew nothing about politeness or courtesy, so he directly grabbed the thread from Shao Xuan’s hand, “Give me!”

Shao Xuan did not hold tight on the thread, and he just gave it to Keke, and then continued to collect the white hairs in the surroundings.

Tuo had nothing else to do, so he helped collecting the white hairs.

Keke stood up with the thread in his hands. He tried tearing it but it did not break. Oh, it was really elastic!

“It’s a funny thread!” Keke murmured.

Ah-Suo glimpsed at Ta, and only to find that the blue veins in his forehead

were popping.

Perhaps he was trying to see if this long thread of tiny white hairs could be pulled off, Keke twirled the thread around his hands at both ends, and pulled hard when there was only a small part of the thread in the middle left.

Just when Keke was about to bleed because of the thread, the thread broke and made a 'pluck' sound. However, the part that broke was not the middle part in between.

"This is super cool! What do you plan to do with it, Ah-Xuan?" Keke asked while rubbing his hands that were almost wounded.

"I'm thinking about setting a trap with it if there's enough time, to see if I can catch something." Said Shao Xuan.

The team leader was even more unsatisfied.

Ta regretted taking him out this time, and he decided to kick him out of the advance group once they came back. He would not allow Shao Xuan into his advance group ever again!

When Ta announced the end of the break, Shao Xuan had collected and fletched lots of white hairs. He rolled them up into a big roll and put it into his animal skin bag. Those white hairs were very light. Although the roll looked large in size, it weighed only as much as a mere small nut.

Then, they had to besiege and hunt for those jumping fruits.

Those jumping fruits that dislocated themselves from the tree, if they were cut they would be totally disabled. The warriors in the hunting team were quite experienced, so they hardly missed.

As for Shao Xuan, he was not even qualified enough to pick up those disabled jumping fruits. the team leader just told him to "Stay aside and try not to be a burden."

Shao Xuan did not complain, but observed closely. He was learning how the others were striking the fruits.

Those fruits were very prompt in jumping, and sometimes they would flee in

large groups. People were easily distracted by the massive moves. So warriors had to keep an eye on one single fruit, and strike it down before paying attention to another. Meanwhile, they had to measure the striking trajectory on the fruit in their minds.

The jumping fruits had no complicated emotions as animals, but they knew how to chase profit and avoid harm. You could let them slip away if you didn't pay enough attention.

Shao Xuan hid behind a tree, yet struck down six fruits while he had the chance.

The jumping fruits away from their tree mother would probably spend one or two days in the wild, before they attached themselves on the branches again. If they could not make it back on time due to various reasons, they would just die out, or be eaten by other creatures. Also, there was a slight chance that they might root themselves in the ground and become a new plant.

What the Shaman required was not the whole fruit, but the seeds. Normally, warriors in the advance group would just eat the flesh and keep the seeds. So in here, most things on their menu were plants.

They only stopped when all the jumping fruits dislocated themselves from the tree.

If they see the disabled fruits on the ground, they would pick them up and put them into their animal skin bags. So when they were hungry, they could eat the flesh and keep the seeds of the fruits.

Aside from the seeds of jumping fruits, the advance group was required to cut out the root of some swamp plant. Unlike other plants, its branches and leaves grew down the swamp, while its roots would grow up into the air, and reach outside the swamp.

Warriors would need to be careful not to slip into the swamp.

People in the advance group would use a certain cutting method: While one warrior entangled the root of the plant, the other warrior would chop it off with a blade.

It was easy to say, but very difficult to execute. The method contained high

technique, and it would test the tacit understanding of the warriors. If one could not successfully cut down the main root, those roots would quickly shrink down into the swamp. Once they did that, it would be nearly impossible for people to find its root again. So it had a big chance to escape. Of course, nothing would happen if the first warrior could not manage to entangle the root.

As for Shao Xuan's task... Ta told him to help pick up those muddied roots and collect them together.

If you ask what Shao Xuan was feeling now, he would say that, okay, I am only playing a small role here.

At night, the advance group would rest on a giant tree. There was a hole in the trunk, and it was especially carved out. Not only this tree, there were holes established in quite a few trees around. However, it was a matter of luck whether they got to spend nights in those holes. Sometimes the holes would be taken over by birds or other animals. Warriors needed to find other tree holes if they could not drive them away.

Shao Xuan had seen them collecting some kind of a fruit. After being burnt, the fruit would emit thick smoke. Warriors would throw those burnt fruits into the tree holes, and soon enough, the little bugs inside the tree holes or on the trunk would be smoked out and then drop on the ground. When the smoke wore off, there would be a layer of different kinds of bugs kids lying on the ground.

When they were tossing burnt fruits into the holes, Shao Xuan took out the thread and kept himself busy nearby.

Someone in the advance group would be responsible for the guarding, so Shao Xuan worried about nothing. It's just that Ta was very unsatisfied with Shao Xuan's behavior. When Shao Xuan asked for Ta's permission, Ta had a poker face all the time, and it took him quite some time to say yes in a very rude way, as if Shao Xuan had done something shameful.

In fact, Shao Xuan knew it at heart, that Ta did not plan to take him out during the next hunting mission. He also didn't want to tag along the next time. Although there are quite some advantages of being a member of the advance

group, he preferred staying with Mai's hunting group. He was treated as a mascot in this advance group, and Ta was a strict but stubborn person. It was not comfortable staying in the advance group, doing nothing. Compared to that, it was real hunting that thrilled him.

As some warriors were throwing the burnt fruits into the trunk, they found Shao Xuan rushing back and forth not far in the woods as they looked back. So they asked their teammates, "What is he doing?"

"Setting a trap, I guess?" the other said unsure.

"What could be trapped at night? We can't use the prey anyway. By the way, doesn't he know that the boss hates setting traps and that stuff?"

"Who knows? He might as well play hard while he can. Have you seen boss' attitude? It's doubtful whether he could tag along for the next hunting trip."

"Then we won't care what he does."

For most warriors in the advance group, Shao Xuan was no relative or friend. Later on they did not plan to be attached with him, either. So he was totally shut out from their small cliques.

There were factions even within the tribe.

When there was no more bug dropping out from above, Ta called on the crowd, "Now let's go up. It's almost dark."

Shao Xuan had just finished his job, so he followed the others climbing up.

Just as Keke said before, in this place they would rarely start a fire. So during the night when they were sleeping in the tree, there was no bonfire.

People used giant leaves to block the entrance, and all of them started to feel drowsy. Of course some would take turns to be on duty as to guard against the surroundings, which was more than necessary.

Shao Xuan was not hungry as he had eaten something while outside. As night fell, the vast green land outside became noisy again. All kinds of sounds were created from near and afar, which indicated that some leaves and flowers were closing and opening.

With the waves of sounds, Shao Xuan gradually fell asleep, until he was

woken up by sounds of clattering and buzzing. Some others woke up at the sound as well, but seeing the guarding warriors show no signal of danger, they fell back to sleep again.

Shao Xuan paid extra attention to those sounds, as he was trying to figure out what creatures had fallen into the traps, and how many of them were captured. However, he was not as experienced as old Ke, and his estimation was without accuracy.

Since it was already night, it was impossible for Shao Xuan to go outside and check on the traps. He had to wait until tomorrow. In fact, he did not wish for something precious, all he wanted to do was to see what kind of nocturnal creatures existed in this land. It's probably his only and last chance to be here, he wanted to see more.

Just wait, he'll have his answers tomorrow.

*[E/N: I can't wait for tomorrow though! Next chapter is gonna be satisfying, enjoy the cliff :p]*

# Chapter 77 – Pictures at the end of the scroll

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan had a sound sleep after midnight. It had been a while since he had last dreamt about something. However, tonight he had a dream.

As a matter of fact, Shao Xuan himself also had no idea what was exactly in the dream. He dreamt of something green, which gradually covered his whole view. It was a flowing green, and he was drifting in the sea of green. The green entered his chest every time he breathed, which made him feel cozy all over the body. It felt like every part of his body had been cleansed. Let's say that his body was the ground covered in dirt and dust, but then got all washed clean by the cool water. He felt purified all over.

Unlike the tense and depressing feeling in the past, Shao Xuan only felt totally free from inhibitions this time. It was a kind of comfort which Shao Xuan had never experienced before. All the fatigue and bad mood in this hunting mission had been washed away, and Shao Xuan wanted to howl to the heaven.

All changes happened in silence, but they were breathtaking!

Early in the morning, when the sun came out, the warriors slumber was disturbed by various kinds of sounds in this green land. However, it was the rushed voice of a warrior that woke up everyone.

“Boss! Boss, come here! Check this out!” That warrior had climbed down the tree a minute ago, and he was shouting at Ta from the entrance of the tree hole. Ta was reading a roll of animal skin before he looked at the warrior.

All the warriors became clear-headed even though they were yawning a second ago.



Given the voice of the warrior who just spoke, obviously he had found something quite special. It couldn't be a threat, but should be peculiar enough.

Not only Ta, the other warriors all climbed down quickly.

Shao Xuan was the last person to exit the tree hole. He looked down from the entrance, and found that all warriors that rushed down were circling around the trap he had set last night.

"What the hell is this?!"

"It looks funny. Is this its limb?"

"The limbs of a tree?"

"Is it dead already?"

"I poked at it, but it didn't move. Perhaps dead."

"You should untie this thing, and then we can have a clear look at it."

"...but how to untie this knot?"

"Oh you stupid thing, you can just tear it apart..."

"Stop it, Keke! Stay away! You are such a tactless moron!"

Ta had told them to untie the thing trapped in the rope, but only to find that they had nowhere to start with. The thread strapping the thing was made from the white hairs from yesterday, which meant that it was hard to cut. Also, they needed to be careful not to break the thing trapped inside.

Tuo held a stone knife up high, but after a while, he decided to quit. He looked around, and found Shao Xuan climbing down the tree with no rush. In a hurry he said, "Come over here, Ah-Xuan! Something's in your trap!"

The clamorous crowd immediately quieted down.

The trap was set by Shao Xuan last night, however, within the night it captured something. Last night there were even warriors taunting him.

Ah-Suo glimpsed at the team leader standing beside him, only to find that the boss was thinking about something with a poker face. He acted as if he had not heard Tuo calling upon Shao Xuan.

Shao Xuan walked towards the circle, and warriors quickly cleared a passage for him to approach the trap.

Last night, Shao Xuan did not set many traps, for he was not familiar with the place after all. Only two traps were set casually, since he received no support from the others, and time was limited. He couldn't ask people to wait for him. He had found a tree nearby that had some sticky resin secretion, so he put some at a trap.

Well, now on the place where he daubed the resin, there was something glued there. It looked like a simple skeleton formed by green branches. There were legs, and hands without complicated fingers. There were three 'toes', long like claws.

Shao Xuan did not expect this resin to be so sticky after it got dried in the air. Yesterday when he put it here, it was like normal glue, however now it was totally superglue. He thought that if there was some creature that could run fast, he could use the resin to slow it down. For even if it was fast, the sticky glue would decline its speed. Meanwhile, it would allow the snare to tie the creature tight.

While in the other trap, there was a football-sized taupe ball trapped inside. When there's a gust of wind, the ball trapped in the net of white threads would suddenly create a buzzing sound. It would fly along the wind, but since it was trapped within the net of white threads, it was pulled back again. Because of the rebounding force, the white thread created sounds of vibrating strings.

"So the sound from last night was created by this thing!" one of the night guards said.

"I heard it too yesterday! Unexpectedly it was caused by this ball."

"What is it, boss?" asked Ah-Suo

Ta moved his sight from the odd green skeleton, and then took a look at the bouncing ball in this net of white threads. He took out the roll of animal skin, and opened it to the last one third part.

The first two thirds of the scroll had the pictures of all the things that they

would search for. Every time when they come to the woods, they would be able to find most of the creatures as long as it was the right season. However, the latter one third of the scroll recorded all those rare things. In the Shaman's words, one could only be considered blessed if encountering them.

Because of that, they never paid extra attention to finding them. In the past, their ancestors would rarely encounter one or two creatures on the end of the scroll. A few years ago, the team leader of the other hunting team had found a plant pictured on the end of the scroll. His name is Gui-He. Being the team leader of the other hunting team, he is also a candidate-in-running for the Chief's position in the future. Obviously he had received high praise and hence improved his impression with the Shaman with that rare plant.

Gui-He got his name directly from the Shaman. If you carefully explored his family, you'll find that Gui-He was the son of the Shaman's nephew. Naturally Gui-He was more close with the Shaman with his ties of blood. If Ta's father weren't the Chief, he would not have been qualified enough to compete with Gui-He at all. Especially since recent years, Gui-He had much more glorious harvests than before. That was the reason why Ta was eager to find the rare plants. He even brought Shao Xuan in his advance group, just to take advantage of ancestor's blessing.

However, Ta did not anticipate that they would encounter something rare. Ta's mood became complex, as all the rare things were captured by Shao Xuan.

Just yesterday, he was complaining that those traps were little tricks that would wear down one's willpower... Today, he received an invisible slap on the face, and it was a good one.

If he had known that traps could help catch the plants on the end of the scroll, Ta would never despise those "little tricks".

"This is the Wind Ball from the end of the scroll." Ta pointed at a picture of a ball near the end of the scroll.

Shao Xuan reached over to take a look at it. The pictures on the animal skin roll were quite simple, but the holes on the ball were exactly the same as the ones on the ball he captured.

"Hey, that's terrific!" Ah-Suo rubbed his hands and laughed. You know, they

would have higher status in front of the Shaman if any plants from the end of the scroll were found.

The others all seemed delighted.

“What about the other one?” asked Tuo.

They all quieted down again as they waited for Ta’s answer. Before when they were checking the Wind Ball, they did not find anything on the scroll like the other one in the trap.

That thing’s “feet” were glued by the resin, and below its waist, there were lots of white threads winding around. Just because of that, it would not manage to escape even if it could lift a ‘foot’.

Aside from that, people found that this thing had ‘arms’ and ‘legs’, besides, the torso was made from a few branches. But, there was no ‘head’.

Ta stared at the ‘headless’ skeleton with an inexplicable look.

“When I first joined the advance group, the Shaman and the former Chief had told me something.” Ta pointed at the tied green skeleton and said, “It looks like the plant that the Shaman had talked about. The Green Thief.”

“Green Thief?”

“What is that?”

“Is it useful? The Shaman did not add it on the animal skin roll.”

There were a lot of clamors of comments.

Ta was smiling in a weird way.

“Is it useful? Damn right it is! It can’t be any more useful! If it is indeed the Green Thief, we would be received as heroes of the tribe when we return! It’s said that the herbs made from the Green Thief would allow people to see in the darkness!”

All warriors took a deep breath, and then, their breaths became more and more rapid.

Night vision. It was something that all of them had been craving for.

Why was everyone so afraid of the night? Because at night, they would lose

their vision. Even intermediate totem warriors, or even senior totem warriors would freak out when faced with darkness. Hence, instead of hunting at night, warriors in the hunting team would hide in a tree hole or mountain cave.

Warriors in the tribe had hunted down various kinds of animals and ferocious beasts, among which many of them were nocturnal ones. People said that you could have a clearer vision in the dark if you ate the eyes of those nocturnal animals. However, it was not true. At least, those who had eaten the eyes did not feel much progress in their night vision. Or perhaps it worked, just produced minor effect.

If, if this was the Green Thief...

# Chapter 78 – The Green Thief marches at night

---

Translated by Sunyancai

As the others were immersed in the concept of “Green Thief” and “night vision”, Shao Xuan carefully observed the traps he set yesterday.

In fact, the tree secreted quite a lot of resin. But only limited quantity could be used to set the trap. Shao Xuan discovered that the resin in different sections of the tree had varying levels of viscosity. When cutting out the bark, there was only a tiny bit of resin that was sticky enough to be used in the traps. He collected the sticky resin, and applied them around the snare. However, it could only cover two snares.

Yesterday, when they were cleaning the remains of those dead bugs, warriors had shoveled a layer of moss and grass away. So it was very bare in the surroundings of the tree that they were resting on. The smell of the burnt fruits remained, which could also drive away most of the animals.

Consequently, Shao Xuan found that there were lots of marks in the resin on the ground. The tree he cut yesterday overflowed with plenty of resin, but most of it was not sticky enough. On the edge of those marks in the resin, there were obvious traces of something being dragged... Apparently something had stepped on it.

No warriors in the advance group had touched it, or else there would be clear footprints.

Shao Xuan thought for a moment and then looked around. He set his sights

on a plant nearby, which was in full bloom. On its top when the wind blew, the pollen would scatter over the ground.

“Can I pick those flowers, team leader?” Shao Xuan asked. Ta had mentioned that Shao Xuan should report before every single action, for acting without authorization was absolutely forbidden.

Ta gazed at Shao Xuan for a moment, and then agreed, “Yes, just go ahead.”

If in the past, Ta would’ve never allowed Shao Xuan to go pick the flowers, for such moves were totally dull in his eyes. However, now he felt that perhaps Shao Xuan had found something.

Shao Xuan climbed up the plant, and tried to break the flower off with his hand. However, he did not succeed, so he held out the stone sword and chopped on the stem. With his hands he held the calyx (the green part on the bottom that protects flower), and then carefully passed it to Tuo, who was standing beneath the plant.

Only after cutting off two flowers, did Shao Xuan climb down the plant.

Tuo, who caught the flowers from Shao Xuan, was stained with pollen all over his body. It wasn’t avoidable, for the flowers were rich in pollen.

“What are you going to do with this, Ah-Xuan?” asked Tuo.

“I’d like to see if there are any traces on the ground.” Answered Shao Xuan.

“Trace?”

The others surrounding the Green Thief looked at Shao Xuan as well.

Shao Xuan held the calyx and angled towards the ground, as he softly shook the orange pollen down on the ground.

People saw Shao Xuan circling around that tree with resin. He held the flowers while shaking down the pollen. In a little while, the ground under his feet was covered by a layer of orange pollen.

After the pollen was distributed, Shao Xuan found a broad leaf and kept flapping it as if it were a fan.

The layer of pollen on the ground was blown away, but some of it remained

on the ground.

The orange pollen was quite obvious, and those left on the ground formed many footprints. They were the same footprints similar to the Green Thief that was ensnared over there.

Seeing the footprints down on the ground, Ta looked up at the crowd and said, “Do the same! Pay extra attention on the places with the resin.”

The tree that Shao Xuan had cut was not the only tree with resin. Yesterday when Ta was checking on the surroundings, he noticed quite a few trees with the resin. All of them had somehow spread their resin onto the ground and it covered a large area.

At Ta’s command, all the blossoming flowers in the early morning suffered. They were all cut down by warriors in order to get the pollen.

In a moment, pollen and leaves filled up the woods.

Fortunately, it was not dangerous in the surroundings.

After quite some time, they finished distributing and blowing away the pollen. However, all were in silence this time.

The resin that had spread on the ground revealed numerous footprints. They were not obvious because of the grass and moss. Some of them were not even in the exact three-toed shapes. However, all warriors knew that they were the same footprints as before, and they were heading towards the same direction.

The orange footprints were quite large in number, and thickly dotted. Since many places were covered by fallen leaves or weeds, it made it difficult for the pollen to work. People had every reason to speculate that there were more footprints than they would have ever imagined.

Apparently, a large nocturnal army had marched through this place last night, right beneath the tree that they were resting on. However, no sound was heard by the night guards, aside from the one that got captured by Shao Xuan’s trap, of course.

Ta had spent so many years in the advance group, yet he had never seen a



nocturnal army of plants.

The Green Thief marches at night in silence.

The reason why the Green Thief was not listed on the animal skin roll was because it was too hard to find. It could be very risky, for the ancestors all knew about how dangerous it was to hunt at night. Many brave warriors had died hunting in the dark. They had no other choice, but to remove the promising target from their hunting list. So later on, there were no hard-to-find plants like the Green Thief on the animal skin roll.

In the past century, no one of the advance group had ever encountered the Green Thief. Had Ta not paid constant attention to his grandfather's and tribal elder warriors' stories, he would not have connected it the Green Thief and it would have always been a legend to him. He had always admired those ancestors who had seen the Green Thief in the past.

However, unexpectedly...Unexpectedly today they captured one alive!!

Although it was captured by Shao Xuan's trap, Ta knew it at heart that he was slapped right on the face for his contempt. He felt it was worth it, seeing the Green Thief with his own eyes.

Ta still could not comprehend what had happened.

"The Green Thief marches at night...the Green Thief marches at night in silence! It is the Green Thief!"

"Then let's just untie this snare and collect it already, boss! Do not let it end up in another creature's hand!"

"Right, right! I'll fetch the wooden box from the tree hole!"

"Will the wooden box work? What if we use the stone box?"

"Or just fetch them both?"

"But there's only one Green Thief! What to do with two boxes, unless we cut it into two parts?"

"Does anyone know if the Green Thief could be brought outside? What if it just dies when we bring it out?" Keke murmured.

“Keke, you shut up!!” all the others shouted.

“But the snare is too difficult to untie...How to untie your snare, Ah-Xuan?”  
Tuo looked at Shao Xuan, who was standing not far.

However, Shao Xuan paid no attention to them now... He “saw” something. It was blurred, and all the sounds nearby seemed to be muted. It was silence.

One, two...ten, a hundred...

A thousand? Thousands of them? Perhaps there were more...

Those green figures were walking towards the same direction in groups. Compared with the Green Thief that he captured, those Green Thieves had their “heads”, and their heads looked like inverted mops. The Cyan Thieves were the same height as Shao Xuan, but were as skinny as bamboo. They were walking in the woods without any sound.

“Ah-Xuan?”

“Hey, what’s wrong with you?”

Warriors over there planned to keep calling him, but were stopped by Ta.

“Is he seeing something?” said Ah-Suo.

Seeing something?

There’s nothing but trees over there.

Unless it was the epiphany of the ancestors?

Thinking about that, all the warriors trembled without warning. They dared not to be noisy.

“Hey, he moved!” Keke whispered.

Over there, Shao Xuan walked ahead on foot. He was walking towards the same direction as the Cyan Thieves were heading to. But after a few steps, he looked back at the trap again.

“Oh, now he’s looking back!!” Keke said again.

“You just shut up, Keke!” Ta growled.

Originally, Shao Xuan saw those Cyan Thieves walking besides him, and some

of them were walking through his body, as if he did not exist at all. Shao Xuan couldn't help but walk with them in the same direction. However, those Cyan Thieves were too fast for him to follow.

Shao Xuan felt that he was being assimilated, but quickly enough he resisted the feeling of assimilation. He looked back at the trap totally confused.

The others assumed that Shao Xuan was looking at them. But in fact, he was looking at the Green Thief, which was tied on the ground.

After being trapped, the Green Thief found it impossible for him to escape. So its head just dislocated itself from the body. It was not dead, but it left a part of its body out, to allow the main part to survive. It was the same as when a gecko fled without its tail. When the time was right, it would grow into a whole creature again.

Shao Xuan moved his sight away from the trap, and then looked at the direction that the Cyan Thieves marched towards.

He saw a Green Thief walk up on a tree, with its toes stuck on the trunk. It was perpendicular to the trunk but it walked as if it were still walking on the ground.

It moved upwards for about fifteen meters, and then, it reached out its "hand" to poke into the trunk, but quickly withdrew. Then, like earlier, it walked down the tree, and rejoined the nocturnal army.

What was in there?

Shao Xuan observed the tree for awhile and then began to climb its trunk.

Ta indicated that all warriors should surround Shao Xuan for his protection, in case of any accident or emergency. His eyes were fixed on Shao Xuan. Indeed, he wanted to find something with Shao Xuan's help, but he also promised the Shaman that he would take Shao Xuan back to the tribe, safe and sound.

Over there, Shao Xuan saw a tiny hole when he reached the spot that the Green Thief poked into the trunk. Some green thing like a bean sprout was in it.

Looking at the "bean sprout", Shao Xuan gripped its head with his fingers and suddenly pulled it out. The "bean sprout" was little, but it took him some

strength to pull it out.

Seeing that Shao Xuan pulled out something with the same color as the Green Thief, Ta had sparkling traces in his eyes, “The seedling of the Green Thief?”

The Green Thief. It walks in the dark with its green body. It steals the life of the tree to breed its offspring.

It was said that the nocturnal army of the Green Thieves would only exit once in a year.

Was it really the blessings from the ancestors?

# Chapter 79 – Fire Lance

---

Translated by Sunyancai

When Shao Xuan came down from that tree, he was immediately surrounded by the others, for all of them had heard Ta's words.

"Is this the seedling of the Green Thief?" Tuo had sparkling eyes, and stared still at the young bud in Shao Xuan's hand, which was smaller than his finger.

"Is that eatable?"

Keke pushed the others in front of him away. As he was about to reach out his hands to take that young bud from Shao Xuan, he was stopped by Ta, who blocked him with his arm.

"Let me have a look at it." Said Ta.

Seeing that Ta was here, Shao Xuan passed the bean-sprout-like young bud to him. As for Keke's earlier question about whether it was eatable...Shao Xuan guessed that the answer might be positive.

It did not feel particularly special when you held it in your hands, but Ta assumed that it was the seedling of the Green Thief.

"How did you know that there was this seedling there, Ah-Xuan? Did you see anything earlier?" asked Ta.

They just witnessed Shao Xuan walking straight towards that tree as if he knew it was there. Then he climbed up the tree and pulled the seedling out directly.

"Earlier?" Shao Xuan rubbed his head, and acted as if he was recalling hard, "Someone might have told me that there's something over there earlier. So I

went for it.”

“But you looked back then, what did you see?” Ta stared at Shao Xuan’s eyes as he asked.

Shao Xuan did not try to avoid Ta’s sight, but continued, “I felt that someone was calling my name, so I looked back.”

Calling your name?

Who called you?

The ancestors?

Almost all of them were thinking the same thing.

“Aside from this one, are there any other similar seedlings?” asked Ta again.

Shao Xuan frowned a little, looking bewildered as well as embarrassed.

“You should just think about it calmly.” Ta said gently.

Shao Xuan lowered his head, as if trying very hard to search his memories. But in fact, he was only faking it. The vision of the Green Thieves had already disappeared, but he had a vague impression about which trees had the seedlings in them.

If it was old Ke who was asking, Shao Xuan would have given a detailed explanation. However, it was Ta, so Shao Xuan did not plan to tell the truth. Since everybody assumed that he was blessed by the ancestors, he decided to let the ancestors take all the credits, so as to save himself from finding more excuses.

After thinking for about two minutes, Shao Xuan pointed at some trees nearby.

Ta paid no more attention to other things, but hastened to command the warriors to go search in the trees that Shao Xuan had pointed out. Now everything besides this had to be put aside, the Green Thief became the top priority. Although a lot of things on the animal skin roll had not been found, a Green Thief would be more than enough to make up for that. It could even outdo all of them combined. Although those young seedlings needed to be confirmed, it was completely worth it to search for them.

Not all the trees that pointed out by Shao Xuan had seedlings, but warriors were very careful when searching all the trees. They were almost searching it inch by inch.

Shao Xuan could not tell the exact location of the other buds, for he had only paid extra attention to the one, so he only knew the precise location of that bud.

“Hey, I’ve found one!!” Ah-Suo shouted out cheerfully. He would very much like to swallow the seedling he had at hand immediately. In fact, he would totally have done that, if Ta wasn’t staring at him.

Seeing those circumstances, Ta gave Shao Xuan the strip-shaped stone box with the headless Green Thief inside, and said, “You keep this for now, while I go and search as well. Just wait here. Do not wander around.”

“Alright, got it.”

Shao Xuan took the stone box, and rested leaning against a tree. The reason why he could see the visions should be because of the other special ability in his body. In the past, it warned him of the dangers that were about to occur. But now, he seemed to be able to see something that happened in the past. However, Shao Xuan could not control it at his will yet.

As he was resting, Shao Xuan suddenly looked at the ground beneath his feet. Something was trying to come out from below.

But the others were absolutely unaware of the coming danger. Probably because all them were in the trees and had no connection to the ground, so none of them had noticed the thing approaching fast beneath.

“Something is coming!” Shao Xuan shouted.

Almost at the same time that Shao Xuan finished his words, fiery-red vines drilled out from the earth.

Luckily, Shao Xuan had a quick reaction. He leaped high as he shouted out the warning, and he leaped higher with the help of the trees nearby.

“It’s the Fire Lance!”

“Run, Ah-Xuan, run!”

The others quickly withdrew from the trees.

“Careless!” Ta pulled out a stone axe from his waist and tossed it towards the vine.

Crack!

It was the sound of stone chopping on a piece of wood.

The bloody-red vine that came after Shao Xuan was as thick as an adult’s arm, but it got chopped down into two pieces by the axe. Blood-like liquid poured out and sprinkled on the ground.

However, it had only dislocated the Fire Lance’s tip, and the “bleeding” vine was still chasing after Shao Xuan. What’s more, there were more than ten vines drilling out from the ground. According to Shao Xuan’s estimation, at least fifty vines had drilled out in the air, aside from those thin and short ones. No one knew how many more of them were still hiding beneath the earth.

When the warriors had withdrawn, Shao Xuan’s pressure decreased. His ability was still quite limited, so there was no chance that he could take the tough attacks from those tough vines.

Even though they were merely vines, they were totally different from the red vines that Shao Xuan had seen earlier. The ones Shao Xuan had seen could only sweep away the prey, and they were much less aggressive. However, the one that they were dealing with now was much fiercer. They stabbed directly as if they were spears.

The tree that Shao Xuan leant on for resting earlier had already been stabbed through at least three times. And all of that happened in the blink of an eye.

It was the Fire Lance. The tips of the vines were as sharp as spearheads, while the tiny hair-like extrusions on its body would dance like fire while moving. It deserved the name, one hundred percent.

Every single hair-like extrusions on the vines were used for absorbing. They could absorb a plant’s liquid, as well as the fresh blood of humans.

The experienced warriors, who had hunted a long time in this green land,



were all familiar with this plant, so Ta and the others knew well enough how they should be handled.

When Shao Xuan was dodging the attacks, he paid extra attention on Ta's moves. There was much to learn under such circumstances, especially from those experienced old warriors. He needed to take the chance.

As for the experienced old hunters, although they might lack the fit movements or fancy actions, every single move of theirs was quite prominent. All of the moves were acquired during hundreds or even thousands of tough fights. Sometimes, their conditioned reflexes could be much faster than their thoughts. It was almost an absolutely instinctive reaction, but it was a simple and practical killing move.

All the warriors soon withdrew and entered combat status. Promptly they began to cooperate with each other, their fighting power surged. They had a momentum that could almost beat the Fire Lance. Every warrior had his own weapon. Constantly, they swept their arms, and struck those Fire Lance with the weapons in their hands. All their strength went through the weapons and was hammered down on the vines. The attacks were fluent and kept hitting on the vines in waves.

If any one of them had a small lag, or made a slight mistake, they would risk losing their momentum. They had to rely on the momentum, even if they were not fighting with a ferocious beast.

It all happened in a short period of time, and the ground was dyed red.

The danger was about to pass, but "banging" sounds emerged from underground.

It turned out that the other vines underneath had drilled out as well, while the part that was above the ground had grown twice as large. It seemed that the Fire Lance was about to put up a desperate fight.

More to Shao Xuan's misery, most of the newly drilled-out vines were coming after him.

"Move away, Ah-Xuan!" Ta shouted over at him.

However, right after his shout, Ta found that the running away Shao Xuan,

turned around and was heading back!!

Ta was so furious that he almost spat out some blood seeing that. What the hell? You were clearly told to run farther, but now you headed back? What's your plan? To drag the team's feet?! Did you feel that it was not sticky enough over here?!

Normally, Ta wouldn't choose to continue the tangled fight with the Fire Lance. Instead, he would probably take the team away from it. However, there were many Green Thief seedlings nearby, the things that he was not willing to give up. Clearly, the other warriors all shared his opinion, and none of them had any intention to withdraw. They were nearly crazy in the combat. It was understandable, for it was never easy to encounter the seedlings of Green Thieves, but they were disturbed by the Fire Lance. What's worse, the Fire Lance had destroyed many trees nearby, which made the search for seedlings even more difficult. And, oh yes, some boy was putting himself in the middle of chaos, on purpose!

Great fury flashed in Ta's eyes. He suddenly stamped his feet, and stepped on a very thick vine. The plant beneath his feet immediately got scattered as if were attacked by some very heavy thing. Earlier there were some hair-like extrusions tangling around Ta's feet. Now they were all broken in the blink of an eye. Ta grasped the stone axe, and repeatedly chopped. Sounds of cracking resounded, as if many pieces of cloth were torn apart in the air, and many pieces of hard-wood were chopped apart at the same time.

At the same time when he chopped, Ta moved quickly towards Shao Xuan's direction. He wanted to kick Shao Xuan out of this mess immediately. The one he hated most was someone who stalled the team.

However, only two steps closer to Shao Xuan, Ta found that there was a similar giant Fire Lance chasing after Shao Xuan. The newly drilled-out vines were running after Shao Xuan like spears filled with a lust for killing. They were coming this way.

No wonder the lad chose to run backwards.

# Chapter 80 – Falling into the trap

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Promptly, Shao Xuan ran back with the stone box, which contained the body of the Green Thief. Earlier, he planned to flee the battlefield as far as possible, because he knew in his heart that he would be a heavy liability even if he stayed at where he was due to his limited ability. However, he did not run far before he had a sudden sense of danger. Using his special view, he saw some light green creature approaching him fast from beneath the ground, and it was in the same shape as the Fire Lance that they had encountered already.

Since he woke up this morning, Shao Xuan realized that almost all the plants were in the color of green in his special view. But most of them were pale green, sometimes even crystal-like. However, the color of the Fire Lance was deeper to light green.

His path of escape was blocked. Shao Xuan intended to change his direction, only to find that this approaching Fire Lance seemed to be focusing on him. So was the earlier Fire Lance. He was their sole target.

Was that for the Green Thief?

Or perhaps they were only after Shao Xuan himself?

No matter whether their target was the Green Thief, or Shao Xuan himself, he couldn't handle their attack anyway. His only option was to retreat to seek help.

Shao Xuan sped up his pace as he touched the animal skin bag he had on his waist.

Ta had the confidence to put down one Fire Lance. Even if he didn't managed

to kill it, he could totally drive it away. However, now there was another one. The situation became quite tricky, for both of the Fire Lances were extremely aggressive.

Ta chopped down a piece of vine. There was no time for him to wipe away the “blood” on his face, he yelled at the other few warriors, “You guys go and deal with the other one!”

However, Ta only had about twenty warriors, and in a short period of time, they could not handle both of the two Fire Lances at the same time. In the meantime, people were worried about if there would be a third or a fourth one. If that happened, they would have no other option but to give up this place.

Their hearts were unwilling. Although their hands did not slow down, there was still a faint impatience.

What was the most important thing for a plant?

The roots!

However, those plants that could run freely all knew very well about how to protect their roots. Some of them would even bury their roots deep down under the ground so that others would have a rare chance to attack it. Especially when it came to tough plants as fierce as the ferocious beasts, one would only end up dead if you tried to attack its weak point, yet didn’t manage to make a fatal strike. Unfortunately, no one had the confidence. Even Ta and the others, who were quite experienced in fighting with the Fire Lance, would run away and engage in a real combat only when they were forced to.

As Ta and the others were trying to figure out how to drive those two Fire Lances away quickly, an amplified picture of a snare was formed in Shao Xuan’s mind. There were not enough threads, so Shao Xuan could only try to make an incomplete one.

Now he should not rely on Ta and the others completely. Shao Xuan wanted to make his own contributions, for they were a team after all. They shared the honor and defeat. According to the success rate that Shao Xuan calculated in his mind, the incomplete snare was worth trying.

He had never attempted to set such a large-scaled snare, so he was not sure

about the effect as well. After all, the reality might not agree with his expectation. But no matter how effective it might be, it was worth trying. Even the slightest help counts under such circumstances. What's more, in such a place like this one, quick combat was always considered the best strategy.

Shao Xuan carried the stone box with one arm, while his other hand promptly took out a spearhead dart with a the white thread.

Although he was using only one hand, he was quite skilled in making a knot. With twisted fingers moving up and down, the white thread got tightly entwined at the end of the dart.

Whoosh!

Shao Xuan dodged the whipping vine, and tossed out the dart hard. He was not aiming at the vine, but some point on the ground.

The dart pierced deep underground.

The first point was set, and the second one needed to be set quickly.

Ta and the others were attacking the Fire Lances and had their hands full as they tried to contain them, so that Shao Xuan could easily cope with the situation.

The way that Shao Xuan dodged was artful. He jumped high and landed low, his moves seemed to have no regular pattern, but every single move was made after precise calculation, even if they were only meaningless actions in the eyes of others. All of them were done in a short moment.

Midst the thundering sounds, the whipping vines were dancing in the air wildly. Numerous dirt chunks and stones were swept away by the vines. There were sounds of broken trees, flying dirt chunks and cracked branches, along with the sounds of chopped down vines. So, the sound of spearheads drilling into the trunk, the ground and the vines seemed to be too weak to be heard. Shao Xuan was really fast, no one would know what he was doing without close observation.

Shao Xuan twisted his fingers pretty fast, and he was also quick on the feet.

Every time when he reached some place to bury a spearhead, he finished the knot in the blink of an eye. All the knotting and connecting must be done at the same moment due to the limited time and space. The muscles all over his body were in full function, and the totem power inside him was used to its limit, as it was running through all his meridians.

If you looked closely, you would find that there was a layer of surging airflow around his arm, which he used for setting the snares.

Shao Xuan ran back and forth near those two Fire Lances with the stone box in his arm.

Quick, quick, quick!

Setting a trap must be done quickly, especially when you set it at a hunting scene. Even a small action might cause unpredictable changes.

It was only for a few seconds, and Shao Xuan had finished with the peripheral settings. There was still one middle step that needed to be done.

Shao Xuan stamped on the vine with all his strength, and leapt away before the hair-like extrusions could tangle his feet.

“What are you doing, Ah-Xuan?!”

“Hey! Mind your steps and do not run around!”

Seeing that Shao Xuan was running on the peripheral zone, Tuo and the others got quite confused. Shouldn't he be fleeing away?

“It wants the Green Thief!!” Shao Xuan shouted.

It wanted the Green Thief? The Fire Lances also targeted the Green Thief?!

Before anyone could say anything, they heard Shao Xuan shout out again, “I just set a trap. Everybody needs to move away later!”

He rushed towards the middle of the two Fire Lances, as he shouted.

“Stop it, Ah-Xuan! What are you doing?!” Ta shouted out angrily.

The battle in between the two Fire Lances was not strong. Obviously these two plants had no intention of fighting each other. That was also the reason why Shao Xuan dared to run through them. Also, Shao Xuan was quite fast in his

running. Although he could not fight against the Fire Lance, he had the ability to avoid their attacks.

Shao Xuan stepped on the vines and jumped high.

His moves were too fast to be seen, while the spearhead darts flew through quite a few points. When there was a need for knotting, he would do it in a second.

It's finished!!

But Shao Xuan did not stop running.

Shao Xuan with the stone box in his arms became a perfect bait. No matter where he ran to, the two Fire Lances would be chasing after him, attacking. Just because of that, Ta and the others were following Shao Xuan, to resist most of the vines.

A vine shot up from a sharp angle from below. Shao Xuan did not try to avoid it, instead, he took out the stone sword to resist.

Bang!

There was a crashing sound like two stones hitting each other.

Tuo and the others saw that Shao Xuan was flying in the air because of the recoil.

Keke was the closest one to Shao Xuan, and he planned to rescue him by catching him there. He would be falling directly onto the ground if no one helped him.

However, Keke found out in shock that the boy stopped in the middle of the air. He was supposed to be flying down in a parabola.

Yes, he stopped mid-air.

Steady and still.

In the meantime, people heard something. It was like when wood got strangled tight.

Not only Keke, even Ta and the others were surprisingly shocked with their eyes wide open. But at a second look, they found that Shao Xuan was not

standing in the air. He was standing on a white thread.

When did the white thread exist there?

All the warriors were confused, but they thought about Shao Xuan's earlier claim of "setting a trap". It might work, seeing such circumstances.

"Everybody retreat! Tuo, Keke, Suo! You go back a little more!" Shao Xuan asked the ones in the circle of the trap to step down. He wanted to be safe, even if they weren't in danger in the first place.

Standing on a white thread, the snare in Shao Xuan's mind became clearer than ever.

Some vines were shooting towards him. And at least one of them fell into the trap.

Although there were two separated individual Fire Lances, half of their vines were strangled in the snare that Shao Xuan set. Any single vine falling into the trap would trigger a series of reactions on the snare. It was a chain trap.

Shao Xuan felt that everything was moving slower than usual, and time seemed to have been frozen. All he could see now were the few vines shooting at him, along with some threads, which might not be so clear in other people's eyes. They became more and more clear in Shao Xuan's vision. Besides that, everything else merged into the vague background.

It's near!

Nearer!

One of the vine twisted, and it flew through the thread in Shao Xuan's vision.

It fell into the trap!



# Chapter 81 – Massacre

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan leapt high, he rebounded from the white thread to dodge the piercing vine aimed towards his face. In mid air, he pulled out the last spearhead dart and grasped it tight in his hand.

With the last remnants of the the white thread wrapped around the dart, Shao Xuan jumped. The line pulled taut, Shao Xuan could clearly feel the tension through the body of the dart.

Shao Xuan took a deep breath. The spearhead dart in his hand immediately weaved left and right before he finally pulled it back with all his strength.

Kill!

Creak...

The sound was like some steel threads sawing on wood.

This time, the sound could be heard from more than just a few spots. Dozens of places emitted the same creepy sound almost at the same time, and it was a lot shriller than before. Everyone who heard the sound felt as if they were witnessing a huge tree being strangled to death gradually. Their nerves all stiffened by the sound and the vision.

Tuo and Keke, as well as the others had no idea what Shao Xuan was planning to do, but under such urgent circumstances, they knew it at heart that the situation required their full cooperation. They decided to do their best to cooperate, even though deep down inside they did not think that Shao Xuan could actually accomplish anything.

However, right after they stepped backwards and retreated from the battle zone, they heard those disturbing sounds that set their nerves on edge.

People looked over there to see what was creating that sound, but soon enough, they were stunned by the sight.

The originally loose web of snares tightened instantly.

The vines thrashed and swung in the air, its movements were restricted by the threads. The tension of the threads caused the web to tighten upon itself as the vines moved. However, the vines continued to resist, causing the snare to pull tighter and tighter.

All of it happened within a single breath.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Right after the creaking sounds, there were sounds of wood and threads breaking. People were under great mental strain already, and now the sounds almost exploded in their minds.

Along with the sound, the “blood” of the fire lances splashed everywhere.

Red liquid filled the air and splattered all at once. No matter if the vines were close to ground or were suspended in the air, all of them were sliced by the threads. Its blood red sap poured out along with the haunting sounds of its struggle.

The blood in the surroundings spluttered out evenly, despite of it coming from two separate plants. These fire lances emitted the smell of a dangerous predator belonging to the plant wilderness.

In contrast to the carnage of blood-like sap on the ground, two giant bloody flowers bloomed. Like evil spirits, the flowers were even more colorful than the red fire lances themselves. [In case you don't get it, the 'bloody flowers' are the snare wrapped around fire lances pulled together, being all bloody from the bloody sap.]

Ta used to assume that the blood-like flowers pictured on the animal skin roll were the blood-like. But he discovered that the view he was witnessing right now had surpassed his imagination. The shocking sight he had now seen

impressed him so much that it would be carved in his memory even after a long time.

There was no smell of blood, but people felt like they accidentally stepped into a slaughter house.

It was a massacre. A massacre created by the snare.

Shao Xuan felt that he now had a slight understanding of the “Lethal Trap” Dao that Old Ke had told him about.

However, this was merely a half-done snare, which could only be considered as an incomplete chain trap. Hence it was an incomplete “Massacre”, and could not reach the state of lethality that Old Ke mentioned.

If there were enough white threads, Shao Xuan could totally have made a more constrained trap. At last it would form a net in the center, similar as the one that trapped the Wind Ball. However, the Fire Lance was too large in the scale, and there were two of them. With the lack of material, Shao Xuan could only make a half-assed snare that could only circle half around the two Fire Lances.

However, right now, it was more than enough to just take care of the urgent problem they were facing at hand.

The broken white threads flew down lightly while swaying in the air. “Blood drops” fell down on the ground after the blossom, while broken parts of the vines were tossed up and then headed down towards the ground...

A moment earlier, the Fire Lances were aggressively blustering. But now, they were badly wounded and droopy.

They had been chopped on the vines several times earlier before they were seriously injured by the snare. One of the Fire Lances quickly collected all its broken and half broken vines together and drilled down into the ground like a screw. The earth shook for some moments and then became calm again, while the Fire Lance disappeared.

The other Fire Lance was not so badly wounded as the first one, but still, it

was no longer obsessed with intertwining with the warriors as well, and drilled into the ground a moment later. Perhaps it felt dread by the earlier attack, or perhaps it just lost its appetite for fighting.

The rumbling battlefield quieted down again, with broken branches and red liquid everywhere on the ground.

Shao Xuan was breathing heavily, as the totem strength in his body was running crazily. He almost reached his limit when he was setting the trap, and all his strength was used up by the final strike. Due to the overuse of his totem strength, his arms, shoulders and legs all felt extremely sore after all was done. He had to finish setting the trap as quickly as he could. Earlier he did not feel it, but after he relaxed, his fingers began to tremble uncontrollably. He estimated that the trembling wouldn't stop for a long time.

Shao Xuan was completely worn out and he did not want to keep standing anymore. He shook off the red liquid on his feet, before he looked around and found a bucket-thick branch right behind him. It was broken by the Fire Lances earlier. Shao Xuan directly sat down on the branch, ignoring that there was still red liquid on its surface. Also, he put down the stone box that he had been holding in his arms all along.

The sound of the stone box touching the ground brought people back to their senses.

Tuo looked at the chaos on the ground and then looked at Shao Xuan as he was resting. Before he could ask Shao Xuan anything, his arm was grasped by Keke. Tuo was still quite nervous from the earlier shock, so he was frightened by Keke's sudden grasp as well. He felt that his arm became the Fire Lance's vine, while Keke was about to strangle him as the thread. He almost slapped on Keke's hand reflexively.

"Wh...What?!" Tuo shook off Keke's hand from his arm, and he wanted to shake off the creepy feeling of being strangled like the Fire Lances as well.

"Er...I'm getting cold feet now." Keke's face was twisted. It was rarely seen this bold lubber getting scared like that. A short while ago he was standing near the edge of the snare, and he planned to chop down one of the vines then. However, before he could do that, he saw the massacre in person. Some vines

near him spilled their “blood” all over Keke’s body. Unlike the pleasure he felt while chopping on the vines himself, this time it gave him the creeps.

“Ah-Xuan, what was that?” Tuo calmed himself down while down and then asked.

The others all stared at Shao Xuan at the question.

“That? Well, it’s a trap.” Shao Xuan answered.

Tuo and the others were reluctant to believe that. What kind of traps could behave like that?

Shao Xuan did not give any further explanation.

In fact, those kinds of large-scaled traps and snares did exist in early times, and some warriors in the tribe would use them constantly. However, Old Ke had said that out of the pursuit and admiration for physical strength, people gradually abandoned the skill. Also, since the ferocious beasts grew stronger as time went by, efficient traps required higher quality raw materials, which were not so easy to find. Later on, some more experienced trap-setters chose not to use those traps and snares. So even fewer skills got passed down through generations.

Looking up at the sky, people noticed that almost all the tall branches were splashed down on the ground, and there was a big “window” above their heads.

Beneath the blue sky, the broken branches and sawdust had fallen down already, and there were only light white threads dancing in the wind.

Shao Xuan reached out his hand and caught a piece of it. The broken white thread was only half its original length. The big roll of the white thread had been broken into small pieces, although that they were tied with each other earlier. Most of them became small ends like that.

It was not real steel wire after all, and it was reasonable enough that it was broken like that.

If the white thread had been more tenacious, or if Shao Xuan was given enough time when setting the trap, it would close faster, so as to cut the vines in a split-second, avoiding the splashing of the “blood”. Then it would’ve been a

certain kill for sure.

Of course, just because the thread of white hairs had its limit and flaws, the visual effects and shock it created became much stronger.

Ta and the others weren't the only ones that were stunned. Shao Xuan himself was shocked as well.

He literally did not expect to see such results.

This was the first time that he set such a big-scaled snare, and it was more powerful than he thought. Luckily he had the white thread prepared. However, it was such a pity that the materials were difficult to obtain, just as Old Ke had said.

Ta glimpsed at Shao Xuan with a complicated expression, and then called on the others to clean up the battle field. The broken vines were neither edible nor listed on the animal skin roll, so they were tossed away.

As for the red liquid on the ground...Ta did not mind it at all.

Fire Lance was a "predator" in this forest, and the blood of the predator would send a natural signal of danger to the other species, until the "blood" disappears in the future.

Fortunately, the giant tree that they slept on yesterday remained unharmed. Earlier, they were some distance away from the tree in order to search for the Green Thief seedlings. Then, they became even further away when fighting with the Fire Lances. There were only a few traces of whips and pierced holes on the trunk. The place they used to sleep at night was still there at least.

# Chapter 82 – The bird eggs

---

Translated by Sunyancai

According to Ta's theory, once badly wounded, plants like the Fire Lance would not approach them again for a short period of time. Also, its blood could prevent other creatures from coming close. So temporarily, the tree hole was safe. In fact, it was a lot safer than it was previously.

Many speculated that those two Fire Lances were coming after them for the Green Thief. Because of that, Ta didn't waste any time. He took a few warriors to the marsh pool and brought back some mud. They covered the stone box containing the adult Green Thief with a layer of mud. After that, they used a tree leaf with a refreshing fragrance to wrap it up and finally tied it tightly with straw rope. By doing that, they could hide most of the Green Thief's smell. This was the same method used in the past when they found plants with strong smells. Although it was very difficult for humans to smell the scent of the Green Thief, some plants and animals had their own special ways to sense it. In any case, taking a few protective measures was also good.

Now, no one would belittle Shao Xuan again. Even though they still felt that setting traps were merely some little tricks, nobody could deny the benefit they had gained from it. And so, Shao Xuan was treated with a much better attitude by the others.

Perhaps it was true that Shao Xuan had the blessings of ancestors, which helped them to find the Green Thief. Meanwhile, Shao Xuan's own skills could not be ignored. At least in the eyes of the group, Shao Xuan had many more accomplishments than most of the newly-awakened warriors back in the tribe so far.

After resting for some time, Ta took a few warriors to go search nearby, hoping they would be lucky enough to find more Green Thief seedlings, while Shao Xuan climbed up a tree following Tuo and Keke. The tree hole was in the middle of the trunk. Above it, different kinds of birds inhabited the treetops where there was lush foliage. Although they were not big, with the biggest one only one meter in wing expanse, however, they were large in numbers. So normally, the advance group wouldn't mess with them for no reason.

But because of the earlier fierce battle, many birds were scared away. Basically, all the birds that were usually guarding or resting in their nests were scared off by the crossfire. So when the warriors got back to the tree hole, Shao Xuan followed Tuo and Keke to rob the nests, and they collected many bird eggs.

When eating bird eggs in this place, Ta and the rest always ate them raw.

Shao Xuan took out three bird eggs from one nest, but oddly, they did not look alike at all, even though they were from the same nest. The biggest one was larger than an adult's fist, while the smallest one was the size of a normal chicken's egg from his past life. They were in different colors as well. One was purple red, one was covered by blue and white dots, while the last one was in the color of khaki, with circling patterns on it.

"Are they all edible?" Asked Shao Xuan.

Keke looked back, "Sure, I've tried them all."

"How can one nest have different eggs?" Shao Xuan carefully put the eggs in his animal skin bag, and he had also put a lot of tree leaves.

"Perhaps the bird stole the eggs from elsewhere." Keke did not seem to care.

"Stolen?" Shao Xuan was surprised.

"Of course! With their size, how can they lay such big eggs? The bird from this nest can only grow this big." Keke gestured the size with his hands, "How could a tiny bird like that produce fist-sized eggs? It's not possible! But that kind of bird has long, thin talons, convenient to steal eggs from the other birds."

"All the bird eggs here are stolen?" Shao Xuan was shocked one more time.



“They must be.” Keke was positive.

There’s a saying that things of a kind gather, birds of a feather flock together. These were all egg-stealing birds, regardless of their different species. They lived together because they did not worry about the eggs in the nests being stolen by others, for they were not their own eggs! They wouldn’t feel heartbroken when losing them, anyway.

Thinking about that, these birds must have their own secret places to lay their own eggs. It should be somewhere concealed, or they must have had some unique way to reproduce.

When collecting the eggs, Shao Xuan noticed that there were many eggs that were pecked to pieces. Some broken eggs had some leftover egg white, while in some broken eggs there were remains of the baby birds. It turned out that all those eggs were stolen to be used as food.

When Shao Xuan filled up his animal skin bag, he climbed back down to the tree hole. Ta and the others had been searching for a long time, but none of them could find another Green Thief seedling. They were probably taken away by other creatures. Judging from the behavior of the Fire Lances, the Green Thief was indeed in hot demand. Luckily, Shao Xuan’s trap caught the Green Thieves at night, and they got up early enough to find them before they were snatched away.

In the meantime, it could be speculated that it was highly likely that most of the creatures interested in the Green Thief were diurnal ones, while the nocturnal creatures had no special interest in the Green Thief.

No matter what, they were fortunate enough to have caught the adult Green Thief and some seedlings.

“Boss, would the Green Thief seedling die soon after picking them up?” Ah-Suo looked at the few turquoise seedlings and shared his worry with the others.

The others quickly understood Ah-Suo’s point. They had been in similar situations before. When they picked up a seedling from the soil, it would die quickly, no matter how careful they were, even if they used soil to wrap it. The shelf life of a seedling was much shorter than a grown one’s.

“It’s possible.”

“Why don’t we eat the seedlings now? Or it would be a huge waste.”

“Yes, yes! I agree. What if we wake up tomorrow morning and then find that all the seedlings have died? The seedlings are not adults after all. They can’t be kept for long!”

Everyone gathered together and discussed. If it were other plants in the past, they wouldn’t be so nervous. But it’s the Green Thief for God’s sake! It had not showed its existence in hundreds of years! Any waste of the seedling would be a huge loss!

Finally, Ta decided that they would share the six seedlings at hand now.

Ta thought about waiting until they reunited with the other small group, but he could feel the life fading as he held the Green Thief seedlings in his hands.

Ta pulled down half a leaf and swallowed it first. He was the strongest warrior in the crowd, as well as the leader of their group. So he intended to try it on himself first and then give the seedlings to the others after he had confirmed of its safety.

The warriors stared at Ta. They watched him swallow down the half leaf, and none of them even blinked, for fear that they might miss anything.

“What’s up, Boss? Feeling anything?” Ah-Suo asked eagerly.

Ta carefully checked his body, but he shook his head, “I don’t feel anything, except that I’m a little less tired.”

The group was disappointed. But even then, they still shared the six seedlings eventually. Shao Xuan got a whole leaf. It was a larger share than the others, but no one complained about it. Calculating the credit, Shao Xuan’s share was more than the others combined. If not for the rules of the hunting team that all prey must be shared in the group, Shao Xuan could have kept the Green Thief to himself. Just like the last time when he killed the Thorn Black Wind, the Green Thief could have been kept by him as his game.

Hence, the team knew at heart that they were the ones who had profited

from Shao Xuan's victory. They planned on hunting down more ferocious animals for Shao Xuan on their way back.

The sun set quickly. The sounds of the birds chattering had halved, as not many birds had returned to the nests. They had other nests in other places. When one nest was endangered, they would hide in other nests until the danger passes.

Before darkness fell, Keke asked Shao Xuan to set another trap nearby, to see if they could capture any other creatures. There was no white thread left, so Shao Xuan could only replace it with thin vines and straw ropes.

But Shao Xuan had the feeling that tonight they won't have anymore gains.

When night came, instead of preparing to go to sleep, everyone unexpectedly squeezed in front of the tree hole.

"Why am I feeling that the seedling is taking effect?" Tuo looked at a minor bulge, which was about ten meters away from the tree hole and said excitedly.

"I feel that too!"

"Although not very clearly, I can indeed see further than before."

"It's true! This is just a seedling. What if someone ate the big one? Could he move around freely at night then?"

Even Ta could not achieve the state to move around freely at night. Without night vision like the nocturnal ferocious beasts, movement would obviously be restricted in the darkness.

The effect brought by the Green Thief seedlings was a pleasant delight to them all, but they would not keep it to themselves. They would take the Green Thief in the stone box safe and whole back to the tribe, right into the hands of the Shaman.

Shao Xuan admired the Shaman more because of that. All the warriors adhered to the principles, even when they were faced with huge temptation. This was all from the Shaman's teachings.

That night seemed to be extremely quiet. Everyone had sweet dreams, while the night guards paid extra attention to the traps below. They all wished to

catch more Green Thieves.

Shao Xuan had a good sleep that night, but he didn't have any dreams. No flowing green light entered his dream.

Early the next morning, all warriors hurried down the tree to see Shao Xuan's traps before sunrise. Aside from Shao Xuan's trap, the other people who knew about setting traps also made a few snares. However, they were disappointed today. Nothing was captured. However, the ground which was previously covered in red was replaced by green. Grass grew dense and high to people's knees overnight. The "blood" of the Fire Lances became their nutrition.

# Chapter 83 – Going back

---

Translated by Sunyancai

“Ku Sha Roots, Flowing Blood Leaf, the Seven-Forked Palm, Blood Veins Flowers...”

While Ta, Tuo, and the others were counting the plants that they had already captured, Shao Xuan was counting the days that they had been out hunting. If you calculated carefully, you’ll realize that it was time for them to head back home, for every hunting trip had its time limit.

Ever since they had captured the Green Thief, people in the hunting group would always set a few traps before night fell. However, there was no harvest at all. No useful thing was caught ever since. It was indeed pure luck that helped them capture the Green Thief the other night.

Meanwhile, for the days after, Shao Xuan had been following the team here and there all day long. He was not so helpful with the tasks, given his fighting ability. However, he required no babysitting from the others. In fact, Shao Xuan was more than helpful to the team since he could take care of himself.

These days, Shao Xuan had encountered quite a lot of mysterious things. One time, they almost confronted the Tearers when they were trying to find a plant called the Seven-Forked Palm.

The Seven-Forked Palm was an odd plant. When it senses danger, it would close up the thick bark-like leaves, and warp its core into a hard solid pinecone, while secreting some Tearer-attracting liquid. If the hunting group had been hesitant for even a second, they would have been besieged by a large group of Tearers.

Meanwhile, Tuo had finished the counting.

“Compared with the harvest from our last hunting trip, this we found two kinds of plants less,. However, this time we found the Wind Ball and the Green Thief, which are incomparable, thus guarantees this time’s hunting mission to be a huge success.”

Judging from his facial expression, Ta was also quite relieved. Indeed, they had achieved more in this hunting trip. “We’ll count the species again when we reunite with Ah-Wei. Perhaps they have found the other two species.”

Wei was a senior totem warrior who was almost the same age as Ta. Since the advance group was divided into two smaller hunting groups, he led the other two dozen warriors.

Ta then said to the others, “Let’s get some rest today. Tomorrow we will return.”

“Understood, boss!” said the people. They already felt quite eager to go back home, and they looked forward to sharing their experiences with the other teammates in the advance group, as well as their relatives in the tribe.

Shao Xuan also couldn’t wait to go back home, but not because of the Green Thief. He wanted to head back soon because he had some bird eggs in his animal skin bag.

There were about a dozen bird eggs remaining from that day and he put them in his animal skin bag. The others in the advance group were not so interested in the bird eggs. When they encountered the Tearers the other day, Keke had thrown out all his remaining eggs as bait. The Tearers dieted on bird eggs too. Shao Xuan also threw some eggs out, but before he came out, he left some eggs back in the tree holes. Now they were the only ones he had.

Today, instead of staying in the tree hole, they were staying in a new place for the night. In order to find the plants on the animal skin roll, they had to sleep at different locations. The other night they were sleeping in some leaves, which meant that they had to roll the leaf with themselves inside, and spend the night while in that leaf. The plants leaves were ham-like. Although they were supposed to be pointing up to the sky, twenty-one of its leaves were rolled up and hung there. Each leaf roll had a person sleeping inside.

Tuo said that the peculiar plant had a repellent effect against bugs, and it was also on their hunting list. Warriors would roll themselves up with its giant leaves when they could not find a proper shelter to stay at night. By doing that, they could avoid being attacked by the nocturnal insects. However, it was not doable in the day, for the leaves on that plants would always become hard and impossible to roll during daylight.

This was a very fancy experience for Shao Xuan. As for the bird eggs in his animal skin bag...well, he planned to bring them out as an experiment.

Most of the plants would die when brought out of this forest. Then what would happen to the bird eggs?

The plants in here were quite abnormal, would the insects and bugs also be peculiar since they diet on the plants? Furthermore, could it be speculated that the birds should be more special, since they diet on the fruits and insects? Perhaps the birds contain more nutritional value or medicinal efficacy? Then what about their eggs?

The shelf life of raw eggs was longer than the cooked ones. Shao Xuan did not cook those odd-looking bird eggs as well, since he assumed the same theory would work for them.

The second day, Ta led the group to run back to the rendezvous, where they met the other hunting group. Someone was wounded on their side. Luckily, it was not severe.

The other twenty warriors were totally stunned when they heard about the Green Thief, with their eyes fixed on the stone box covered by the leaves. They wanted to open it and see for themselves, however, all of them knew it at heart that it was not the time.

They took a lift on the backs of the giant dragonflies when they came here from the top of the mountain, and they would be needing their assistance on their way back.

When the sun almost set, all warriors in the advance group waited at some place. One of them climbed up high on the top of some tall plant to scout the location of the army of dragonflies. After all, each return route was not absolutely fixed.

“Over there! Hurry!”

“Hurry, hurry, hurry! Or we won’t make it today! We don’t want to wait until tomorrow!”

Shao Xuan did not have to carry those boxes with plants inside, instead, all his luggage was in his animal skin bag. So compared to the others, he could travel light.

At that time, all of the warriors hurriedly ran towards the direction of the dragonflies in order to catch the lift in time. Shao Xuan felt like as if he were in his former life, catching a bus. Alas!

People climbed up the tall plants quickly, and tied a lasso with the straw ropes they had at hand. When the dragonflies were passing above their heads, they would toss the lassos to catch the dragonfly’s legs. When a warrior was pulled up in the air, he would seize the opportunity to jump down on another dragonfly’s back when there was one below him. If they hung too long in the air, warriors would be easily hit by other dragonflies’ wings.

When they almost reached the mountain, the dragonflies began to flap their wings to fly up high. All objects on the ground quickly became smaller, for they were flying up.

On the green land behind them, leaves on the tall plants began to close up, as well as the flower blossoms. All kinds of sounds indicated that night was about to fall.

“Careful when you jump and don’t be hit by the wings!” Ta shouted at Shao Xuan.

“Got it!”

When the dragonflies reached the cliff, Shao Xuan ran to the dragonfly’s tail quickly, and found a chance to jump down. He used his stone knife to stab into the stone to slow down his speed sliding down along the cliff, until he found a relatively smooth place that he could stand on.

“Move it! Everybody move a little!”



Bam!

The dragonfly that Keke rode flew higher than before, which made him almost hit the cliff when jumping down. He had to make a few rolls before landing on the ground. Although it was not a safe landing, Keke managed to protect the stone box with plants well enough. When he got back up on his feet, people saw that his face was twisted from pain.

When all of them jumped down and landed on the ground, the army of giant dragonflies flew over the mountain and headed to the pond, where they would be spending the night at.

“Let’s go. You should get a good rest, for it will be very busy in the coming days.” Said Ta.

However, people were too excitedly talking about the Green Thief. None of them had much sleep.

On the next day when they left the mountain, did Shao Xuan finally understand what exactly Tuo meant when he said “Nothing can be taken away from here”.

When the green land could not be seen in their sight anymore, the big fresh tree leaf that wrapped the Green Thief’s stone box was withering at a macroscopic speed. It was turning yellow and becoming chips as Shao Xuan stared at it.

The mud that was on the stone box’ surface could not block the smell of the Green Thief completely. And to people’s frustrations, many ferocious beasts seemed to be particularly obsessed with the Green Thief.

Originally, people in the advance group planned to teach Shao Xuan a thing or two on their way back, and perhaps to hunt down some food to bring back. But in fact, they were too busy to even talk to each other the whole way.

In order to protect the Green Thief, warriors of the advance group fought their way back. While in order to get back to the tribe sooner, they did not take any game with them. The longer they stayed, the more difficult situation they would put themselves in.

At first, people would kill whatever kinds of ferocious beasts who came after

the Green Thief, regardless of how many of them were approaching.

Want to steal the Green Thief? No way! Go fuck off and die!

But gradually, people changed their strategy.

What? Some more ferocious beasts are coming after the Green Thief? How many of them? Run, just run!

People in the advance group had never felt so embarrassed before. In the past, they could conveniently do some hunting and take back a few souvenirs from the game. However, this time they had neither the time, nor the mood.

Everyone had an intense smell of blood on their bodies, and all the blood belonged to some high-level ferocious beasts. They had no time to wash their faces, or comb their hairs. Some of them were even more sloppy than children in the orphan cave. The blood became blocks of coagulations, and then became blood powders when they were dried in the air.

Even at night, they were constantly attacked. It was unspeakably miserable.

People suffered from the lack of the sleep, and they became extremely tired, for they had to run and fight at the same time along the way. Fortunately, the average ability of the advance group was quite good. If it were the other normal hunting groups, they would have likely lost some people along the way.

Just because of that, Shao Xuan once again became an alien, for he could restore his strength and energy after just a short rest.

The others were all looking at Shao Xuan in a strange way.

Shao Xuan took a look at his animal skin bag, and noticed that most of the bird eggs were fine. He had put some dried leaves and grass into the bag, and only one of the eggs was broken since they set off.

There was a rule in the advance group, that aside from the target objects, all game could be kept by the one who did the hunting. So, people didn't say a word about Shao Xuan carrying the bird eggs. They had no interest in those eggs, for they had had enough of them when they were searching for the target objects on the hunting list. Also, the whole time, they had quite a variety of fruits. And it had been days since they had any cooked meat on their diet. Now

meat was available again, no one cared for bird eggs any more. However, when people were chewing on the cooked meat, they behaved as if they were dieting on their sworn enemies. Loud noises were made while they ate, and perhaps they were cursing the approaching ferocious beasts even in their dreams.

# Chapter 84 – Coming home

---

Translated by Sunyancai

When the different hunting groups in the hunting team were supposed to meet up, the advance group was usually the first to reach the place. They needed to build a new wooden box to contain all the plants and herbs that they had collected. Because of the Green Thief, the entire advance group hurried back, directly arriving a whole day before the other hunting groups.

Despite finally reaching the rendezvous point, the exhausted warriors did not have much time to rest. After chopping down quite a few trees, they made a wooden box the size of a carriage, and put all the plants and herbs inside, before sealing it from the outside. They used vines to tie the box tight, and then covered it with leaves and other similar things. No one could see what was inside, and insects and other pests were prevented from getting in.

When they had finished packing up the plants, the advance group divided into two groups. One group stayed behind to guard the plants, while the other group went hunting. They would take turns so that they would all have a chance to hunt down some game. After all, they had been out for almost twenty days, so they should at least bring something back home. Or else what would they be eating for the next dozens of days? Besides, they needed something to drag back when they walked on the path of glory, otherwise it would be embarrassing.

There were not many high-level ferocious beasts near the rendezvous, so they did not worry that the storage area would meet any unbeatable dangers. In the first place, the rendezvous spot was located near the mountaintop, so there were fewer animals around.

Shao Xuan wanted to tag along with the first group to go hunting. Ta agreed seeing that he was in good spirits. Anyway, the ferocious beasts nearby weren't so dangerous, so the other warriors in the hunting group would be able to protect him well even if something happened.

One day later, the other hunting groups began reaching the meeting spot.

Mai's hunting group was the second one to arrive out of the five hunting groups. It seemed that they had a good harvest this time, for the facial expressions on the warriors' faces were quite joyful.

"How's the advance group, Ah-Xuan? You look well!" Lang Ga slapped Shao Xuan's shoulder as he laughed. However, his smile froze right away when he set his eyes on the other warriors in the advance group.

Not only Lang Ga, the other warriors in other hunting groups all speculated that perhaps the advance group had encountered some massive disaster after seeing the state they were in.

After quite a few days of endless running and killing, they were busy building the box and packing the plants when they finally arrived at the rendezvous. Aside from that, they had to go down the mountain for hunting in order to maintain their status and reputation in the team. Hence they could not choose the easy targets and thus they had no time to rest properly.

The forty warriors were divided into two groups, and those groups took turns going down the mountain to hunt. All the rest they had was from last night, but a single night's sleep was not enough for them to recover their fatigue. Naturally, they were a mess when the others came to the rendezvous. Even after a quick clean up, they were still a mess.

When had the advance group been as embarrassed as they were now? The others had all kinds of speculations. At least, from the time they were awakened and joined the hunting team, they had never seen the advance team in such a state, as if they had experienced an inhuman torture.

As for the reason for that...people could not help but compare the differences in this hunting trip.

The only difference was that – Shao Xuan had tagged along with the advance

group.

The other kids had originally been soaking in the happiness of participating in the first hunting mission in their lives and discussing their experiences with other newly-awakened warriors. However, now they whispered to each other about Shao Xuan.

“Look! The warriors in the advance group are all so tired, they must have had to protect Shao Xuan! However, Shao Xuan is totally fine.”

“Yes, indeed. He must have been a huge liability.”

“So what if he had been blessed by the ancestors? Good fortune can’t be at his disposal all the time. In fact, he is lucky enough to have come back safely.”

“Well, judging by the situation now, I suppose he will not be allowed to tag along with the advance group next time.”

“Alas, it would have been better if he had just stayed humble and stayed in the small hunting groups like we all did. He is not old enough, nor strong enough for the advance group after all. He is only a junior totem warrior like us, but he wanted to tag along with the strongest group.”

The kids were not the only party that had such thoughts. The others in the hunting team all shared the same thoughts. All the people in the advance group except Shao Xuan seemed to be worn out and exhausted, just like the other experienced warriors who had to do their best to protect the newbies in the team. So it was reasonable that they got this tired because of Shao Xuan’s existence in their group.

Of course, the place that the advance group goes to for hunting would be much more dangerous, and any slight mistake could result in severe consequences and different outcomes. Shao Xuan was the only unstable factor this time.

“I’ve said that they shouldn’t have allowed Shao Xuan to join the advance group.” Someone whispered.

“The warriors in the advance group must have tried real hard to protect the kid, Shao Xuan. Look at their exhausted faces! I’ve never seen them like that!”

“It seems that the advance group had run into some real trouble this time!”

“Well...to have been tortured like that...Even the game was a lot less...”

“I think that my boy is no worse than Ah-Xuan, ha-ha. Perhaps he’ll be recruited into the advance group some day in the future!”

“Perhaps someone in the advance group liked this kid Ah-Xuan, given that he had hunted some nice beasts last time. Perhaps he wanted to marry his daughter to him, so he specially recruited Ah-Xuan to the advance group!”

“Stop making things up! The team leader has no daughter!”

“But the others have daughters!”

“Hey, listen, do you think that the others in the advance group are planning to kick Ah-Xuan’s ass when we get back to the tribe?”

“Ha-ha, probably.”

It was not known who had said what, but all of them began to laugh aloud. However, the laughter did not remain for long before their faces gradually froze. Because they noticed that the forty people in the advance group were staring in their direction, as if looking at morons.

If people in the advance group weren’t too tired to move, they would already have headed over and kicked their butts!

Ah-Xuan was useless?

Have you seen the traps that the lad sets? Have you seen the kid capturing the Green Thief? Have you seen the kid cutting down two Fire Lances and soak the ground with their “blood” in one move? You don’t even know anything so what are you blabbering about?!

They couldn’t help but recall the past when they had mocked Shao Xuan themselves. In the end, they got slapped in the face just two days after entering the green forest.

They had suffered a lot? Well, if they could have the chance to capture the Wind Ball and the Green Thief, they would very willingly suffer every day!

As for the troubles they had encountered along the way, there was even less to say. Everything had its price. Since they had found something as precious as the Green Thief, it was worth it to spend much more effort. Ever since they first joined the advance group, they had mentally prepared to pay the price to be elites.

Tortured? If they could find more rare plants on the animal skin roll, get to eat things like the Green Thief, and encounter all those wonderful treasures, they would wholeheartedly accept this torture every day!

Seeing that the expressions of the warriors in the advance group were not good, the leaders of the small hunting groups all glared at the ones who were chatting, warning them to stop.

Aside from the warriors in the advance group, no one knew that it was Ta who approached Shao Xuan first to ask him to join the advance group. The others did not know that Shao Xuan had made no such request, so naturally they had all kinds of ideas. But there were some nimbler minds who had guessed that the real situation must have been more complicated. However, no matter what the advance group went through, it was not something they could gossip about.

“Not having the ability and still mocking others.” Lang Ga sneered at those who were chatting with a look of despise.

“What did you say?!” Someone in the other crowd stood up suddenly. Being unable to do anything about the advance group didn’t mean they were unable to touch him!

“I called you losers, so what?” Lang Ga was not afraid either.

A few other warriors in the same hunting group stood up together with Lang Ga. They had a pretty good impressions of Shao Xuan. Whether it was because of the blessing of the ancestors or not, they felt that Shao Xuan was a good warrior. That was reason enough.

The two hunting groups were only one second from fighting each other, when the team leader shouted out, “Shut up, all of you!”

Ta swept both groups with a cold look and said in an icy voice, “Whoever talks



again should forget about the next hunting trip.”

People on both sides immediately quieted down, for the team leader had the right to pick the ones who could attend the next hunting trip.

When Lang Ga was walking back to his hunting group’s resting spot, he saw Shao Xuan waving at him from the advance group’s spot. Earlier he had a face full of dissatisfaction but now he showed a big smile to Shao Xuan. Shao Xuan’s gestures were telling him that he had something good for him when they get back home.

When all the hunting groups had gathered, Ta led all of them back to the tribe.

– Inside the tribe –

Old Ke was sitting on a piece of stone in the training ground with his hand on his cane, looking thoughtful.

Suddenly, he heard something and looked up. It turned out to be Caesar, running towards him with a stone coated with grass juice in his mouth.

After Shao Xuan left, Old Ke had not stopped Caesar’s training. He trained Caesar with Shao Xuan’s methods. He had to admit that the kid’s methods worked pretty well, and Caesar was making obvious progress. He could quickly find and fetch things even when you threw them extremely far away.

As a reward, Old Ke tossed Caesar a piece of meat. Before he could say anything, he saw someone running back to the tribe, shouting that the hunting team was returning.

Counting the days, it should be about time for the hunting team to return.

Old Ke could not wait any longer. After Caesar finished eating his piece of meat, he sat on the wolf’s back and gently tapped on his head, “Go back home, quickly, Ah-Xuan’s about to return!”

At first Caesar was reluctant to head back, but as soon as he heard Shao Xuan’s name, he began to run quickly, even refusing to listen to Old Ke’s command to slow down.

The wounded had already been sent back to the tribe, and when Old Ke had

reached the tribe, there were plenty of people standing along the Path of Glory with their necks stretched, waiting.

Finally, figures appeared in the distance, and the man standing at the mountain foot whistled to signal to the awaiting people.

When the hunting team finally set foot on the Path of Glory, the people along the road began to cheer wildly. This time, some families had children who were participating in their first hunt, so all the members of these families were present to welcome their return.

Seeing that Shao Xuan remained unscratched, Old Ke was relieved at last. However, when he gazed at the others in the advance group, his heart leaped a little. With his keen eyes, he could easily discover that the status of the warriors in the advance group was not normal.

He recalled the time when Shao Xuan said “You can just rest assured” before he left. Old Ke’s right hand clenched over his chest, unable to calm his racing heart. It seemed that every time Shao Xuan said “You can just rest assured”, something big would happen...

# Chapter 85 – Breaking through it's shell

---

Translated by Sunyancai

When they had returned to the tribe and completed the sword cleansing rite, all the warriors in the hunting team descended the mountain and returned to their homes. Shao Xuan did not have many kills, so he could carry everything and leave the mountain directly.

The Shaman didn't detain Shao Xuan to chat, as all his attention was focused on the Green Thief that was brought back by the advance group. But after the sword cleansing ritual, the Shaman had informed Shao Xuan that he would send someone to invite him to a talk in a few days.

This time, the ferocious beasts that the advance group had hunted were less than before, the quality was also lower. However, their merit was the biggest. Unfortunately, the Green Thief could never be spoken about aloud, and only a few people in the tribe learnt about it. Moreover, those who knew were only those with high positions or large contributions in the tribe. Most common people had no idea. The only thing they knew was that the advance group had made huge contributions this time.

Most of the normal people wouldn't pry into the details of the advance group's contributions.

They tended to care more about the harvests of their own families and friends. In regards to other people, they were nothing more than the topics of their gossip. Even though many residents were curious about the appearances of the advance group at first, they were no longer concerned once they returned home and busied themselves with processing the game.

Shao Xuan rushed over to Old Ke's house once he had dragged the meat home, bringing some eggs and fresh meat along the way.

As Shao Xuan travelled down the mountain, he delivered some bird eggs to Mai and Lang Ga. He had eaten his fill of them in the green forest, and the only reason he had brought some back was to allow the others to have a taste. He was curious to see if eggs from the green forest were different from those from other places, and if they could be used for medicine.

In Old Ke's room, Shao Xuan briefly described this trip's harvest. As there were some things that could not be shared, Shao Xuan instead described in great detail the white fur he had used in the traps.

"The white fur could be woven into a long white thread and is very suited to use in traps. It is a pity that it cannot be preserved for very long. I initially wanted to bring some back for you to take a look at, but it was all used up on the way back. We encountered some troubles, and after setting the traps, the used thread started deteriorating after a few days and lost its elasticity, a single tug and it'd break. By the time we reached the tribe, it had all disintegrated."

Although some of the terms that Shao Xuan used while explaining felt very unfamiliar to Old Ke, he could still guess the meanings, and hence understood Shao Xuan's words.

"That's too bad." Said Old Ke. The lack of good materials was also one of the reasons why trap setting skills were difficult to pass down.

"It would be good if someone discovered a way to bring them back whole." Said Shao Xuan.

Old Ke shook his head, "You can't force that."

For Old Ke, all he wanted was to pass down the skills he had to someone suitable. Now that he had found Shao Xuan as his apprentice, he had no regrets. What's more, that Shao Xuan could tag along with the advance group and return safely, was proof of his luck and ability.

"What are those eggs?" Old Ke looked at the eggs that Shao Xuan had placed in the pot.

"I brought them back from the forest. People in the advance group often eat

them, so I brought some back.”

On hearing Shao Xuan’s reply, Old Ke did not inquire further. Since Shao Xuan said that it was on the diet of the advance group, it should be something good.

Shao Xuan kept three bird eggs for himself and gave the rest to Old Ke. After having dinner at Old Ke’s place, he brought Caesar back to his own cabin.

Before sunset, Shao Xuan planned to treat the animal meat that he had brought back first.

A stone pot was set in the room. After kindling the fire, Shao Xuan put the remaining three bird eggs into the stone pot. He wanted to cook them first before cutting them and bringing them to the orphan cave.

Shao Xuan paid no mind to the pot after tossing the eggs in. Instead, he treated the animal meat outside his cabin. Otherwise the night swallows would come to stir trouble after dark.

Caesar was chewing a bone in his paws as he crouched beside the door. Suddenly, his ears twitched as he looked back at the stone pot inside. He listened carefully, and then ran towards the stone pot to look inside.

There were three bird eggs in the stone pot, and each of them was the size of Shao Xuan’s fist. They weren’t the biggest amongst Shao Xuan’s stock nor were they the smallest or the ones with the most patterns. These were merely in different colors.

Shao Xuan put the meat in the stone trough for pickling before he noticed that Caesar was staring at the stone pot.

“What are you looking at?” Shao Xuan walked over and glimpsed inside the stone pot.

Instantly he found that one of the eggs had cracks on its shell, and it was even trembling.

What the fu\*k?!

Shao Xuan reached in and scooped the broken egg directly from the stone pot. He held it in his palm and carefully examined it.

Earlier there was only one crack on the shell. Luckily, Shao Xuan's quick actions prevented water from getting in. The crack on the shell became bigger and bigger, while sounds of chirping could be heard clearly.

Very obviously, the chick was about to come out from its shell.

Looking back at the stone pot, Shao Xuan used his other empty hand to take the other two bird eggs out.

Fortunately, the stone pot had just been set up and the water was not too hot or the newborn bird would be directly cooked after spending a bit more time in the pot.

None of the eggs that Shao Xuan brought back had had such circumstances. He had eaten quite a lot of them, and there had never been an embryo. When collecting those bird eggs, Shao Xuan had followed Keke's rules, only picking those that looked recently stolen. Normally there would be no baby bird inside. That was Keke's experience. It was not due to Keke having a warm heart or something. It was simply that it was not convenient to start a fire in the green forest and Keke did not like to eat raw baby birds.

Recently stolen birds eggs were relatively cleaner than the rest, while the older eggs would have stains and other marks on their shells. The egg-stealing birds paid no attention to hygiene. Their nests were crude and simple. Often, bird droppings would fall from the nests above onto the nests below. Instead of shaking the eggs one by one Shao Xuan selected eggs that were clean.

Also, under those circumstances, it did not really matter whether there were baby birds inside. Just like Keke had said, if you didn't feel like eating it, you could just throw it away. Previously, Shao Xuan had never encountered any eggs with forming embryos. Who knew, now he had.

Having just skinned a few animals, Shao Xuan's hand was still bloody. In the palm of that bloodied hand, the crack on the egg grew bigger, and the sound of chirping grew louder. Shao Xuan could feel the egg's movement clearly in his hand. He stared at the egg and thought, if the chick can survive, he'll keep it as a chicken. He did not know whether it could lay eggs like chickens, but it won't be a problem, for he could always eat it after it grows bigger in a year.

The broken egg shell got pushed away, and the baby bird inside gradually

revealed its appearance.

It was not like the chicks that Shao Xuan had seen in his last life. The chick was wet all over with barely any down. Its eyes were still closed.

There were two types of baby birds, those that matured early, and those that matured late. Early maturing bird could open their eyes once they got out of their shell. It would be covered in soft down and could move around and eat food independently. However, the late maturing bird could not open its eyes after birth, and it had little fluff. Instead of feeding itself, it had to be nurtured by its parents.

Apparently, the one on Shao Xuan's palm was one of the late maturing birds.

Shao Xuan examined the beak of the hatchling on his hand, and noticed that it had a beak for eating meat.

Probably the smell of blood on Shao Xuan's hand stimulated the baby bird's nerves. It opened its mouth wide and pecked on Shao Xuan's palm. Perhaps it considered Shao Xuan's hand as food, only to discover that it could not swallow it.

Shao Xuan looked around, and took out a piece of old rug made from animal skin and threw it over the stone table. He then placed the hatchling on the rug, before taking out a chunk of unsalted animal meat. He cut a slice off and tore it into smaller strips, using two thin branches to pick up a strip before putting it into the bird's beak.

This chunk of animal meat was from the weakest amongst Shao Xuan's hunted preys, but it was not that weak. Shao Xuan had no idea whether the hatchling could bear the energy that it contained.

Unexpectedly, the baby bird swallowed the meat strip directly, and opened its beak again, chirping for more.

It seemed to be fine.

Shao Xuan continued to feed it for a while before it finally closed its beak and fell asleep immediately after.

Shao Xuan looked at the silent fledgling on the animal skin rug, and then

shook the other two eggs beside his ears. There was no shaking sound, so he tossed them back into the stone pot for cooking.

As for the new born baby bird...Shao Xuan shook his head. It was almost cooked, but luckily it broke its egg shell before being cooked.



# Chapter 86 – A fighting chicken

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan had no idea what the bird would be like after it grew up, or what habits it would have, or whether it could fly in the future. Perhaps it was something like a chicken, or perhaps it would turn out to be some kind of raptor. If it was a chicken-like bird, then there would be no other use but to eat it as food. But if it turned out to be the latter, it could be trained as a hunting falcon. Even if not for hunting, it could be used as a lookout.

Of course, it was too early for any of that now. Shao Xuan did not know the bird's potential yet. If it was useless, other people would kill it before Shao Xuan needed to do anything himself. After all, it was not Caesar. Caesar had the Shaman's marking plate since he was a young wolf. Even if he had lost all his instincts and became docile, no one in the tribe would dare to harm him.

There was an ice cave near the top of the mountain. A lot of people would store the unsalted meat inside the ice cave, but a part of the meat was handed in as remuneration.

Shao Xuan also stored some meat inside the ice cave. He could not cure all the meat he had brought back, for Caesar did not like the salted ones. Also, it was not good for Old Ke's health if he kept eating the cured meat. Moreover, now he had a baby bird in his house, how could he feed them all with only salted meat?

"It's so troublesome!" Shao Xuan sighed. He could just abandon the baby bird, or toss it to Caesar as food. However, he felt that he should at least try raising it.

Three days later, the baby bird opened its eyes.

It was much earlier than Shao Xuan's expectation. Originally, he thought that perhaps the bird would be like most of the birds he saw in his last life, spending seven to ten days before opening their eyes. However, it only took the bird three days to open its eyes, and its body was much fluffier. But it could not walk yet. Once it felt hungry, it would open its beak wide while chirping loudly, as if it feared not being heard.

Within those same three days, Shao Xuan had been doing stone crafting work in his own cabin. Now that he had some basic tools for stone crafting, he could finish most of the normal tools by himself at home. Old Ke would occasionally drop by and check in on him. He told Shao Xuan to take a few days break, and make some tools while he had the time. Once he had replenished his stock, he could go to the training ground for more training.

It only took Shao Xuan one night's sleep to restore his energy. During the three days, he had crafted quite a lot. Some tools could be used to set traps, while the others could be used for training. He even made a few more complicated sets to be saved for the next hunting trip. He had decided to join Mai's hunting group for the next hunting mission.

"Ah-Xuan!" someone shouted his name outside the door.

The people who came were Tu and Jie Ba, who were currently in charge of the management of the orphan cave. They brought along four fishes for Shao Xuan. Since Shao Xuan would constantly send food and other things to the kids in the orphan cave, the kids would also bring Shao Xuan a few of their fresh catches.

Most people would never return to the cave once they came out of it. For example, Ku was managing the orphan cave before Shao Xuan, but he never came back to visit ever since. However, those who had awakened together with Shao Xuan would occasionally return. No matter whether they came back to show off their ability or kills, at the very least they did not cut their ties with the orphan cave. Of course, that was because Shao Xuan had brought along quite a few changes to the cave when he was in charge.

No matter how the others behaved after leaving the orphan cave, Shao Xuan would bring food every time after he returned from a hunting trip. He had

enough food for himself anyway, so it didn't hurt him to share with others. In return, the kids in the orphan cave were very grateful towards Shao Xuan. Their lives had changed a lot because of him, and they became much healthier.

Shao Xuan did not reject their goodwill. Although fish was far from sufficient now for Shao Xuan in regards to the amount of energy it contained, but it was not bad to change tastes once in awhile.

Every time Jie Ba and Tu came over, they could not hide their admiring gazes. It was indeed pretty awesome to have become a totem warrior. It meant owning one's own cabin, and hunting down more food. Growing was also faster! Previously, Shao Xuan was shorter than them, but after a short period of time being a totem warrior, he was even taller than Jie Ba, who was the tallest kid in the cave.

"Don't envy me, perhaps next year it will be your turn." Shao Xuan handed a small chunk of salted meat to them, "As per the usual rules, every person in the cave should only have a small piece. Do not eat more, eating too much will harm you."

Shao Xuan would give them the lowest grade animal meat, for they could not endure the high grade meat given their physiques. Also he would not give them much, for the kids could only absorb a little. In the past, the meat jerky that Mai and Lang Ga gave Shao Xuan was also made from the lowest grade meat. As for the meat from the Four-Fanged Wild Boar or the Thorn Black Wind, Shao Xuan would never let the kids in the orphan cave touch it. In the past, Shao Xuan didn't know about the seriousness in this, but now that he knew, he would strictly regulate the quality and amount of meat given.

When Tu and Jie Ba had left, Shao Xuan lifted a fish and cut it into chunks. He tore some pieces and pressed them to the baby bird's beak. Just a moment ago its beak was open wide, but once the fish pieces were placed in front of it, it snapped shut tightly. When the fish was replaced with animal meat, it opened its beak wide again.

"You are such a picky bastard!" Shao Xuan cursed.

Shao Xuan lifted the fish and looked at Caesar as he squatted in a corner.

Caesar looked at Shao Xuan and then at the fish he held in his hand. One

moment later, he turned away and ignored both Shao Xuan and the fish in his hand.

“Shit! You both are picky bastards!”

Originally he wanted to use the fish to feed the baby bird. However, judging by the current situation, the fish was despised by those two little bastards.

On the seventh day, Shao Xuan had almost finished preparing the tools. He planned to go to the training ground with old Ke. After serious consideration, he decided to bring the baby bird along with him, as he didn't know what it would get up to if it was left behind.

In fact, the baby bird was growing very fast and visible changes could be observed every day. Perhaps it was because the environment was special, so the bird grew quickly. Also, the bird had tenacious vitality. Shao Xuan had no experience with birds nor was he that attentive, but the bird grew healthily enough anyway. It had a good appetite, and would chirp for food after short naps.

Now, the bird would not be staying all day in the nest that Shao Xuan made for it. Once Shao Xuan ignored it, it would crawl out and walk to the table's ends. If Caesar happened to be beside the table, the bird would just roll down from the table's end and land on the wolf's back. Caesar was very much annoyed by such behavior, and for a few times, it almost killed the bird with his paws.

Fortunately, Caesar knew how to follow the rules. He learnt that Shao Xuan wanted the bird to stay alive, so he tolerated the bird to behave like that. Or else it would already have become his snacks.

Shao Xuan found that the bird did not only have a tenacious vitality, it was quite bold too. It was merely a few days' old, and now it dared to peck on Caesar's nose hard. Don't let it fool you by its young age, it had some strength. There were already quite a lot pecking marks on the branches that Shao Xuan used to feed it. Also, it was not afraid when landing on the wolf's back. Instead, it would keep pecking, and quite a few times, Caesar lost some fur to the bird. No one knew whether it was brave or stupid. Once it was kicked away by

Caesar, but a moment later it came back and made trouble as usual.

The baby bird was too noisy and it kept chirping all day. So Shao Xuan simply named it “Chacha”.

On the tenth day, the brown down on Chacha’s body grew denser and thicker than before. Now Chacha could stand up and walk around. However, his walking was not so steady, and once he walked faster, he would fall on the ground.

Just like the earlier days, Shao Xuan took Chacha and Caesar to Old Ke’s place, and headed down to the training ground with him.

When Shao Xuan was doing the training, Old Ke would observe from afar, while babysitting the bird. Lately, the old man enjoyed toying with Chacha using a stone worm a lot.

Chirpy had no taste for stone worms, but he liked pecking on them. Old Ke would hold a stone worm with branches and swing it in front of Chacha, while Chacha would extend his neck and lift his weak wings, so as to prepare himself into a battling mood, before he really charged forward to peck it. Soon enough, the stone worm between the branches in Old Ke’s hands would be pecked to pieces.

Shao Xuan went over there to have a rest after he had broken through a series of traps. He smiled when he saw the broken stone worm in the branches that Old Ke held.

“He’s so aggressive, perhaps he’s one of the fighting chickens, he would fight with whatever comes in front of him.” But it was good to be aggressive, for it won’t be starved to death if he got thrown out of the tribe, unless he wanted it himself.

“Fighting chicken?” Old Ke hesitated for a minute, and smiled, “It’s a good name. He would definitely be cooler than those chickens with beautiful tails in the forest!”

Shao Xuan tried to search his memory about the ostrich-like pheasants he saw in the forest. If Chacha turned out to be the same size as those pheasants, and remained to be aggressive like this, he would not be allowed to stay in the tribe.

Either he would be thrown outside far away, or be killed as food. The tribe would not allow such a creature to exist within.

He should be well trained, no matter he becomes a chicken or a falcon in the future.

When he came back in the afternoon, Shao Xuan encountered Tuo, who was on patrolling duty.

“Ah, it’s you. I did not expect to see you, therefore I was about to ask someone else to deliver the message.” Said Tuo.

“The Shaman wants you to come up the mountain tomorrow.”

“Got it, I’ll go up the mountain tomorrow.”

“There’s something good.” Tuo whispered, and he gave him a ‘knowing’ look.

The so called ‘something good’ must be about the Green Thief. Shao Xuan knew it at heart, so he left after saying thanks.

When heading back, Shao Xuan opened the animal skin bag, and took a look at the napping bird inside, wondering whether he should take it with him when he goes to the mountaintop tomorrow.

# Chapter 87 – The Shaman’s blessing

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Going up the mountain the following day, Shao Xuan took the animal skin bag. He thought it would be better to inform the Shaman about him keeping the bird.

The animal skin bag contained Chacha. That little one had been contained in the animal skin bag for so many times, that he had already gotten used to being carried like that. In fact, he remained silent inside.

Residents up in the mountaintop were quite familiar with Shao Xuan, and some of them would even greet Shao Xuan once they saw him. Shao Xuan greeted them back one by one with a smile, no matter whether they were from Ta’s hunting team, or from the other one.

“You came.”

The Shaman was sitting inside the stone room, waiting for Shao Xuan. His smile grew bigger as he saw Shao Xuan enter. The wrinkles on his old face stretched all over his face.

Actually, not everyone could receive the Shaman’s nice attitude, let alone the fact that Shao Xuan was still pretty young. He was pretty much the only one of his peers who could be treated by the Shaman like that.

There was no need to say more, and Shao Xuan walked in directly before sitting on a straw mattress.

“Chirp!”

As Shao Xuan sat down, Chacha chirped inside the animal skin bag. Perhaps

he had sensed the alien environment in the surroundings. When the animal skin bag touched the straw mattress, Chacha shouted out uneasily.

Ever since Shao Xuan went inside, the Shaman had made quite a few glimpses at the animal skin bag that he carried. Now with the sound, the smile got replaced by a puzzled expression on the Shaman's face.

Shao Xuan reached inside and took Chacha out from the animal skin bag.

Compared with the time when it was newly born, Chacha had grown much bigger now, and Shao Xuan could barely hold him with one hand.

"Tthis is...?" the Shaman stared at the baby bird that Shao Xuan held in his hand.

"It's from a bird egg that I brought back last time." Shao Xuan explained the whole story briefly, "So I guess I can train him as an experiment. I can train Caesar, so I assume that I can do the same with Chacha."

The Shaman remained silent, "..."

Seeing that the Shaman remained to be puzzled, Shao Xuan hurriedly added, "I mean, I can train Caesar into a hound, so perhaps I can train Chacha into a falcon. Old Ke had said that Chacha might be some aggressive predator, hence I would like to try training him. It may probably be useful while we hunt. Even if not for hunting, it can be an observer in our tribe, and warn us from the sky if danger approaches."

The Shaman looked down, with no other facial expression. He asked as calmly as ever, "What if you fail to do that?"

"Then I'll kill it." Shao Xuan had no hesitation about that, for he had lived long enough to know the rules in here.

All those undisciplined ones would either be killed or be abandoned. Normally people in the tribe would tend to choose the former option, killing. It was more efficient and straightforward; less irresolute and hesitant. They had no meticulous emotions, so they acted in a rough and wild way.

"Good." The Shaman smiled again, and this time, it was a more delightful smile than the first one when Shao Xuan entered the room. He seemed to be



quite joyful.

“Let me take a look more closely.” Said the Shaman.

Shao Xuan stretched his arm out and held Chacha below the Shaman’s nose, so that he might have a closer look at the bird. Meanwhile, Shao Xuan prepared his other hand to defend in case that Chacha should want to peck on the person in front of him. The Shaman was one of the two people of the highest position among the whole tribe, and in fact, he had somehow a higher status than the Chief. There’s no way that Shao Xuan would allow Chacha to offend the Shaman. If he really hurted the Shaman, he would definitely be skinned alive by other people in the tribe.

However, to Shao Xuan’s surprise, Chacha behaved pretty well today. Except for the sudden scream he had made at first, he remained quiet, and nor was he about to peck on anything, or anyone.

The Shaman stared at the baby bird as it was covered in fluff quietly, while Chacha stared at the man in front of him in silence.

After a while, the Shaman lifted his dead-bark-like hand, and took out a palm-sized stone plate from a short desk beside him. The stone plate contained some black powders. He reached out the other hand and soaked his index finger as well as his middle finger into the powders. After doing that, he used his thumb to twist on the index finger and middle finger, with the black powders in between. Then, he made a half-fist without his thumb, and reached his half fist in front of Chacha.

The Shaman tapped on Chacha’s head with his thumb. It was a light tap, but a visible stain of black quickly inked on Chacha’s brown gray hair. However, Chacha did not dodge at all, he kept staring at the Shaman, very quiet, which surprised Shao Xuan a lot. That thing hadn’t been so quiet ever since the day it hatched.

No matter why the Shaman did what he did, Shao Xuan knew that the Shaman had permitted his deeds. In other words, the Shaman had given his permission on Shao Xuan keeping the bird in the tribe. Moreover, after being “blessed” by the Shaman, no one would harm him even if he could not be

tolerated in the tribe. No one would ever dare to kill him, and the worst case would be to abandon it.

However, the Shaman did not stop after placing the stone plate down. Instead, he took out a patterned plate and passed it to Shao Xuan. It was the same patterned plate that he gave Caesar earlier. Clearly it was for Chacha.

Apparently, he valued Chacha more than Caesar, for he gave a double guarantee to Chacha this time!

Shao Xuan was a little confused, because Chacha was merely brought back and kept as “potential food” with unforeseeable future, and it could oddly receive the Shaman’s high attention like that! Unless the Shaman could predict the future, and he had seen Chacha’s potential?

Unfortunately, when the Shaman chose to play mysterious, no one could pry the words out of his mouth, no one dared to do that as well.

He was just some old man with one foot in the grave, but he could always strike people with awe and veneration.

Shao Xuan tossed Chacha back into the animal skin bag, and made a sincere salute towards the Shaman, so as to show his gratitude. With the Shaman’s blessing, it would be much easier for Chacha to live in the tribe in the future.

With Chacha’s matter finished, the Shaman chose to talk about something serious. He asked Shao Xuan about his experience back in the green forest during the hunting mission. Shao Xuan shared some things with the Shaman. Not all of it, but this time Shao Xuan was less reserved, and he mentioned that he saw some shadows of the Green Thief vaguely.

Shao Xuan did not think that he could keep his special ability to himself forever, given that he probably would be spending all his life in here. He had no one to rely on, and because of Ta, Shao Xuan would not be stupid enough to set all his hopes on the Chief. What’s more, what if Ta really becomes the next Chief and makes things hard for Shao Xuan? It was not Shao Xuan just being pessimistic. During this time’s hunting mission, he did feel that he could not get along well with Ta. There was no human in the right in the tribe, for everything could be decided by the leadership. When a leader said that you were wrong, then you were wrong indeed. There would be no chance for you to make any

explanation.

After some observation, Shao Xuan would rather believe in the Shaman, the so called spiritual leader in the tribe. Although this isolated tribe was not developing fast, it was not severely deformed, and that was all the shamans' credits during all these generations. He believed that the next shaman wouldn't be too bad.

He decided to reveal his secret little by little, so that the Shaman could also be prepared for the whole truth someday.

After listening to Shao Xuan's description in silence, the Shaman amiably passed him two packs of mixed herbs, without asking more about the details, "One pack is health recovery, and the other one is mixed with the Green Thief. Use them soon, especially the one with the Green Thief. Do not store them for too long."

After carefully placing the two packs of mixed herbs, Shao Xuan heard the Shaman say "Who do you intend to follow during the next hunting trip?"

"I was about to tell you that...I want to tag along with Uncle Mai's group during the next hunting mission." Said Shao Xuan.

Ta had not removed Shao Xuan from the name list of the advance group, for he had probably changed his mind and wanted to take Shao Xuan with them during the next hunting mission. However, Shao Xuan was the one refusing to do that. He would prefer to tag along with Mai's hunting group. By doing that, he could get proper opportunity to train himself in the battlefield. If he continued to follow the advance group, he wouldn't be able to keep up with their paces, and he wouldn't be able to solve all the problems with a single trap. Perhaps Ta would think Shao Xuan was an ungrateful kid after hearing his response, and hate him even more.

But so what?

Shao Xuan did not want to enter the advance group and serve as a mascot. He refused to be the one watching in a distance when it comes to real hunting.

"Okay, I understand." The Shaman nodded.

Shao Xuan worried no more after the Shaman had said that. Ta was totally

timid in front of the Shaman. He dared not to judge, let alone refute the old man. Even his father, the chief of the tribe, Ao, would not directly refute the Shaman's decision.

When Shao Xuan left, he made a salute to the Shaman again. The more he knew about the tribe, the more he believed that such an old man deserved people's respect. It had nothing to do with the brainwashing, or anything else.

When Shao Xuan walked down the mountain, he deliberately took a detour to Mai and Lang Ga's houses, to ask them if they had similar situations when they ate the bird eggs. However, the answer was no. The bird eggs they ate were no different from any normal eggs, and Chacha turned out to be a total exception.

"You actually hatched an egg!!" Lang Ga was stunned.

Shao Xuan was totally speechless, but he found it very unflattering.

Lang Ga was more than surprised, and he pulled over Shao Xuan's animal skin bag to look inside. He even reached inside to take Chacha out for a closer observation. The bird was blessed by the Shaman!

However, Lang Ga's hand got pecked on hard as soon as he reached inside.

If he weren't someone with thick skin, or if his totem power was not awakened, he would've been bleeding for sure.

"This bird is ferocious! Better than Caesar!" Apparently, Lang Ga and Keke had the same standards and definitions for "good".

For most of the people in the tribe, all animals and beasts were judged by the same standard. The fiercer they were, the better. Hence people would have more sense of accomplishment when they killed the thing.

"Oh, by the way, Ah-Xuan, you should check on your cabin when you go back home. The wet season is about to come. Although your cabin was newly built this year, it would be safer for you to check it carefully. And you should store more dry timbers inside."

The wet season?

Shao Xuan thought about last year in this time. Indeed, the wet season was about to come.

# Chapter 88 – The river beast “Dread”

---

Translated by Sunyancai

The rain was pouring down hard.

The raindrops were falling from the sky and splashing on the ground, creating loud noises everywhere.

The tree leaves created scratching noises as they were hit by the rain, and it somehow struck people with a feeling that perhaps the leaves were being pierced through by the water.

Among the curtains of rain, a figure quickly went through the woods, while a toothpick-like stone needle pierced through the curtains of rain, and came out from the dense branches. At the ‘thud’ sound, it stabbed into an arm-thick short wooden bar that hung there.

At that time, there were already plenty of similar stone needles pinned on the bar in different angles, which made the hanging stake looked like a hedgehog.

Many bars like that were hanging nearby. Some of them were placed in the thick undergrowth, while some of them were hanging in the trees.

Shila~ (This is a sound, didn’t know what else to make of it)

There was the sound of a quick pull, and the wooden bars in different places immediately moved promptly together. As they moved, more stone needles flew towards them.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

There were wooden bars in the grass, in the bushes, and in the air...  
No matter where they were, they had many stone needles stabbed on them.

The heavy rain that poured down from the sky did not affect the path of the flying stone needles at all!

Whoosh!

The figure running in the woods and the rain curtains jumped, and landed safely after jumping over the branches that blocked him. The sound of landing could hardly be heard because of the rain in the surroundings.

Shao Xuan wiped his face, and then went to collect the wooden bars.  
[He wiped his face in the heavy rain? How pointless!]

He had been doing such training for several days now. At first, he used spearhead darts, and then the stone shivs, which were thinner. Now, he was using stone needles, they were even thinner than the stone shivs.

The white hairs that they had encountered in the green forest while hunting were obviously very soft, yet they could pierce through thick wood bars, and appeared to have no resistance when they pierced into the bodies of intermediate totem warriors. One of the reasons behind that was the materials of the white hair, but the other more important reason was that the speed of the white hairs was too fast!

Shao Xuan was experimenting on that point. He wished that, perhaps someday in the future, he would be able to pierce a thick wood bar with a thin grass needle. However, for now, he had to take baby steps. If he couldn't pierce the wood with stone, he shouldn't even bother trying that with grass.

There was still a long way to go.

Since it had been raining recently, Shao Xuan did not ask Old Ke to come out of his house. It would be pure suffering if he came out in such weather.

Now, every time when Ge went to Old Ke's place for some stoneware, he would mock Old Ke for becoming "tender". In the past, Old Ke would always use his cane to help himself struggle up the mountain when he had to go up. Also, he would never ask for anyone else's help. But now? Now Old Ke rides on Caesar's back when he goes out, and Shao Xuan would carry him when he has to go up the mountain. When it rains, Old Ke would not even step out of his house! That was too fucking effeminate!

Old Ke did not get agitated, and he would keep doing whatever he was doing, totally ignoring Ge's comments. In his mind, Ge was only being jealous and pretending to be the green-eyed monster!

Old Ke would not tell Ge that Shao Xuan asked for some herbs for him from the Shaman. Now Old Ke was in the phase of recuperating. In the past, he was living with a bad mindset, and he could not care less about his life. However, now he had a strong desire to live longer, for he wanted to watch Shao Xuan as he gradually grows up.

Caesar and Chacha were both left in Old Ke's house. Sometimes, Shao Xuan would think that whether he should do some expansions on his cabin, so that Old Ke could come and live with him. After all, Shao Xuan was living alone, and Old Ke had no one else living with him right now. If they moved in together, it would save a lot of time, for Shao Xuan won't have to travel between the two places.

As he thought about that, Shao Xuan was gathering those wood bars and tangled straw ropes.

Last year, the wet season only began after another hunting trip, however, unfortunately, it came early this year. The Shaman told everybody to stay prepared for it, and the hunting team, that was about to set out, postponed their time for leaving.

Behind Shao Xuan's back, a snake-like insect came out from a tree. Unlike a real snake, it had a lot of feet on its body.

It stared at Shao Xuan in silence, while spitting out its forked tongue like a snake. Its body quietly slid down along the trunk, but the thin feet allowed it to stay firmly on the tree.

When approaching Shao Xuan, its body twisted into the form of the letter "S" with its upper body away from the trunk. Aiming at Shao Xuan, it opened its mouth and struck to bite on Shao Xuan's neck with the speed of an arrow.

Shao Xuan did not look back, but casually lifted his hand. He blocked the insect when its mouth was half a hand away from his neck, where he used his fingers to grab its neck tightly.

His fingers slightly pushed together.

Curtch! Puff!

The insect's head got separated from its body.

Shao Xuan flicked his fingers, which made the head of the insect fall on the grass, while its headless body quickly got thrown away in the woods on other side, while Shao Xuan pulled back his hand.

In the whole process, Shao Xuan did not even look at the worm.

When he finished collecting all the stone needles, Shao Xuan got up and looked around.

He had encountered that kind of insect quite a few times in these few days. It's said that every year when the rainy season came, they would drill out of the ground from below. Not only this kind, other kinds of creatures would also drill their way out from the ground. But aside from the rainy season, they were only seen in the training ground mountains.

Shao Xuan walked on the muddy road as he headed back to the tribe. Suddenly, he lifted one foot and kicked on a gravel. The gravel flew towards somewhere on the grass.

A two palms long scorpion-like insect just drilled out from the earth, but it was smashed down by the gravel immediately.

Old Ke had said that those insects that appeared in the rainy season would always attack people aggressively. Almost all of them were poisonous, so people should beware not to get bitten by them, and they should be killed whenever found by warriors.

It's said that some of the insects would try to enter the tribe, so the kids who had not awakened their totem power yet would always get locked in their homes when rainy season came. Adults would sprinkle some kind of grass extract around the house, and it could keep the worms and bugs away.

“Wooo~~~!”

There came a loud noise from the river.

All the warriors in the training ground felt a chill crawling on their spines. They



all stopped what they were doing, and jumped up to look at the riverside.

Shao Xuan had almost reached the residential zone, so there was no hill blocking his sight. He climbed up a tree and looked in the direction of the river next to the tribe.

Behind all the curtains of rain, the leaping figure above the river was not clear due to the far distance. But even when the leaping figure was very far from the tribe, and was not completely revealed, people could still infer its huge size.

That was the decisive reason that kept people in the tribe from exploring the river.

It was the river beast called “Dread”, the creature that held the dominant position in this endless river. People’s fear towards it could be seen by the way they named it – Dread.

People did not know what exactly a Dread looked like, but only by its giant size and horrible voice, people already felt the unparalleled sense of oppression.

When they appeared, it meant that the rainy season had begun for real, and it was not some regular storm, just like the Shaman’s prediction.

The rainy season did come earlier.

When the Dreads leaped up high, their screaming was so loud that it was like a steam whistle ringing beside your ears, which could almost tear your eardrums. But when the giant Dreads fell into the water again, they would create a loud thunder-like roar. This time it was not that bad, it could have been more uncomfortable. People would feel as if they were being punched on the chest repeatedly. If you placed a cup of water in your room, you could see the water shaking violently.

Last year in the rainy season, Shao Xuan was hiding in the orphan cave with his hands covering his ears, like everyone else. Those sounds were pure torture for them, and many kids were trembling all the time.

Not only kids in the orphan cave, every year when it came to the rainy season, kids in the tribe would stay in their homes, with things blocking their ears. It helped a little, but still could not spare them from suffering from the noise.

Some children would even bleed from the nose and ears.

Perhaps, the rainy season was joyful for those Dreads, for they constantly leaped out from the water, seeming to be happy. The tribe was not placed that close to the river, but the impact of the Dreads remained very apparent. For the tribe, rainy season was just a disaster. The only thing that people should feel lucky about was that the Dreads would not come close to the bank, let alone coming on the land, or the tribe probably would've been wiped out long ago.

When the giant Dreads arrived, an urgent meeting would be held within the tribe. The team leaders of both hunting teams would spare some warriors to be responsible for the defense of the tribe. That was also the annual rainy season guard battle.

During the rainy season, some other things might come out from the river, and that was also the reason why the hunting team postponed their hunting schedule. They had to defend the tribe from the creatures in the river.

# Chapter 89 – The fish fence

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Not long after Shao Xuan returned home, Lang Ga came over to inform him that he needs to participate in the patrolling. Every hunting group would oversee a small region, and they were divided into three batches taking turns guarding the tribe.

participating in the patrol did not mean that he would encounter anything dangerous, for it was only a preventive action. There were too many unknown factors in the river after all, and it was better to safe than sorry.

“Mai and the others will start patrolling tonight. You and me will go and take their spot tomorrow in the morning.” Said Lang Ga.

“Okay, I got it. Do I need to bring anything?” asked Shao Xuan.

“No need to bring too many things, a few pieces of useful stoneware will be enough. Every patrolling mission only lasts for half a day.” Lang Ga pointed at the mountain foot, “Over there, near the river. It’s somewhere near the place that you used to go fishing.”

“You probably wouldn’t know, for you stayed in the orphan cave last year... But when the rainy season comes, the river would rise a lot, and it can reach up to...there!” Lang Ga pointed it out for Shao Xuan.

Where he pointed, there was a line of stones, below which no cabin or house existed.

So even those residents in the mountain foot district would only live near the mountain foot, but not build anything directly at the foot of the mountain,

because the water rose up high in the rainy season. There had been some people stationed near the riverside for fishing before, but now they all withdrew to higher ground. No one would ever go close to the river before the end of the rainy season.

Thinking that Shao Xuan probably had no idea of what might happen in the rainy season, Lang Ga told him some things about the rainy seasons in the past. When the rain had eased off, Lang Ga took Shao Xuan out to their patrolling area to have him become familiar with it. He also wanted Shao Xuan to be prepared for it. Although the place that they were guarding wouldn't have many difficulties, they needed to stay alert.

"So you're saying that the hunting team won't go out for hunting missions until the rainy season's over?" Asked Shao Xuan.

Earlier, he assumed that the hunting team was only staying in the tribe for some time, and they would go out hunting once there's no abnormal thing. However, based on what Lang Ga was saying, the hunting team would likely spend all the rainy season in the tribe? Then what would people eat if they hadn't stored enough food?!

"We have no other options. This is the tribe's rule. Many people up in the mountain have stored enough food, and their game is of relatively higher quality. So they, for sure, could survive the rainy season. But people down the mountain have opposite situations. Even if they have stored something, their food contains limited energy, for the game was not strong enough. They will get hungry no matter what. But!" Lang Ga chuckled, "It's far better than the winters. During the rainy season, some things would come out from the river, and we can collect them as food supply."

"Some things?" Shao Xuan thought about the different kinds of insects in the training grounds, and he frowned subconsciously. But if there was nothing else to eat, they had to diet on that.

"You'll see when they come." Lang Ga did not explain much, "We won't starve."

Hmm?

Now Shao Xuan became really curious. Based on Lang Ga's words, the things

were not the insects that popped out from the training grounds. So, what were they?

“It happens once in a year. Although dangerous, it isn’t that dangerous if we are careful enough. It’s okay. Don’t worry.” Lang Ga tapped on Shao Xuan’s shoulder with his fist as encouragement.

Shao Xuan rubbed his shoulder as he stared at the river in the rain.

Afar on the river, the lords of the water were constantly leaping out high. Shao Xuan wondering something after observing those Dreads. Judging by the movements as they leaped, the lords of the water seemed to be swimming towards the same direction. If it was an isolated case, he might just as well ignore it. But the fact was, all the Dreads that leaped up were facing the same direction, with no exception!

“In that direction, is the river going upstream or downstream?” Shao Xuan pointed at the same direction that the Horrors were swimming towards.

“Upstream or downstream? I don’t know. I’ve never been there. It’s too far away.” Lang Ga said easily. For him, the terms upstream and downstream made no difference, so he cared not to think much about it.

Shao Xuan looked in that direction, while thinking and wondering what the place was, and why would all the lords of the water swim towards that direction. The river was very wide. If it hadn’t been freshwater, he would’ve assumed the river to be the ocean...The ocean?!

Did the river travel to the ocean?!

Shao Xuan memorized the two hunting trips he had experienced, and roughly speculated the positions and terrain. He figured out that the lords of the water were probably swimming in the downstream direction. Well, if the river did travel to the ocean, then why would the lords of the water swim to the ocean during the rainy seasons?

Many kinds of fishes would have periodic directional round trips due to various of reasons such as reproduction, food or seasons. It was the so-called migratory instinct. So, were the lords of the water having similar migratory habits?

Shao Xuan shook his head. All was speculation. He won't get any answer from Lang Ga and the others, for they had no idea what the ocean was.

Doesn't matter whether those lords of the water were migrating during the rainy season, Shao Xuan could do nothing given the circumstances right now. However, later when he returns, he will record all the phenomenons he has observed into his own "notebook".

Shao Xuan had already collected and gathered some animal skins which were good for writing. He used them to take records, including the pictures that he saw in the orphan cave. He pictured them based on his memories. If the animal skin doesn't last long, he will carve them on stone plates in the future.

Shao Xuan turned his gaze slowly from the vague giant figures afar, and looked at the riverside for a while. Suddenly, he said, "Lang Ga, what do you say if we make a few fish fences here?"

Lang Ga was thinking about how much food he would be able to collect during this rainy season, but immediately he was brought back by Shao Xuan's question. He asked curiously, "Fish fence? What's that?"

"So, we use wood sticks and nets to make something to block the fish." Shao Xuan briefly described the fish fence he had in mind, and continued, "I'm thinking, that perhaps we can set a simple trap by making those fish fences."

"Traps?" Lang Ga instantly had sparkles in his eyes.

"In fact, it's something simple...." Shao Xuan took out the stone knife that he brought with him, and began to draw on the ground.

Lang Ga was also quite obsessed with setting traps, and as soon as he heard about Shao Xuan's explanation, he could imagine Shao Xuan's whole image with the help of the pictures he drew on the ground.

Lang Ga tapped on his head, and said regretfully, "Why hadn't I thought of that!"

What Shao Xuan wanted to make was a fish-fence-like simple trap. It was not difficult to make, and no other precise setting was needed. It was the same as

setting a fish fence. Wood or stone pillars would be made into a fence, set up around a region.

The fish fences would coil around like a mosquito coil. Some of them were circular, while others were square. Shao Xuan wanted to see what different effects different shapes would make. The entrance of the fish-fence-like trap would be in the direction of the river.

Or, he could use the fish fence to make a space, like the capital word omega “Ω”. Unlike the first two types, this trap’s entrance would be facing the bank. So, during ebb, the fish swimming inside the trap would be blocked inside.

Unless the fish trapped had really high IQ, they would not be able to swim out on their own. Shao Xuan had tried it in his former life, and it always worked.

However, since Shao Xuan did not participate in the tribal patrolling duty in the past, he was not sure whether such equipment could be set up now. Hence he asked Lang Ga about it.

“Yes, totally doable! No problem!” Lang Ga looked at the river surface which was not rising rapidly. He called on Shao Xuan, “Now, let’s find the proper stones as soon as possible, and set the trap while the water’s not rising!”

Something in the river would eat timber, so they could not use wood when setting the fish fences. The only material that they could use was stone. Now it was not the time to care about the stone’s material, so the stone pillars for the fish fence were not so hard to make.

So, when Mai took the first batch of warriors to come here for patrolling, they saw Shao Xuan and Lang Ga being busy doing something along the riverside. From the riverbank to the stone line that was set by the tribe, there were quite a few fish fences standing there in the distance.

Due to limited time, they were too busy to care about the appearances of the fish fences. The stone pillars were not of the same thickness, and some of them were even as thick as people’s thighs. People could totally stand on them.

# Chapter 90 – Don't move!

---

Translated by Sunyancai

“What are you doing now? Setting a trap?” Mai came over and asked.

“It seems you can stand on them when the water rises.” The people beside Mai laughed.

They had no idea what Shao Xuan and Lang Ga were doing, but everyone in the hunting team knew that Lang Ga was obsessed with setting traps. Normally he would make arrow traps and some similar traps, but occasionally he would try different types.

Lang Ga told everyone else about his and Shao Xuan's idea. The other warriors were quite curious. But when it came to setting fish fences in here, it was not only not an obstacle for them, it offered them convenience, for they could jump on them when the tide rose.

“You should go home. Tonight, we'll be doing the patrolling, and Lang Ga, you need to be here early tomorrow with the others.” Said Mai.

“Sure, we'll go back after this is done. Earlier I paid no attention, but now with you here, I realized that I'm hungry.” Lang Ga touched his belly. He was more than satisfied, looking at his own deeds.

On the other side, Shao Xuan had finished his last fish fence. When he looked, he noticed that aside from the animal skin bags that contained the food and stoneware, people in Mai's batch carried some nets that were made from straw ropes.

“Why are you all carrying nets, Uncle Mai?” asked Shao Xuan.



“Well, this.” Mai smiled, “It’s for food, of course.”

Seeing that Shao Xuan was still confused, Mai said, “You will know when you come by tomorrow. Oh, by the way, when you come tomorrow, bring a big net bag.”

Although he did not know what the net bag was for, Shao Xuan prepared one for himself.

On the second day, Shao Xuan dropped Caesar and Chacha at Old Ke’s place early in the morning before he went to the patrolling ground.

As Shao Xuan arrived, Lang Ga and the others in the same batch were already there. To Shao Xuan’s surprise, all the straw nets in Mai and the others’ hands had many watermelon-sized river snails inside!

Not only that, people could see that near the river bank, there were many sharp protrusions, becoming larger as time went by. They were all river snails, swimming towards the shore.

Now, the quantity of the river snails seemed not big, but if they kept coming towards shore, every warrior would be able to collect quite a lot of them after their patrolling duty. For example, Mai and the others had collected a lot.

The river snails had thick shells, so even the piranhas in the rivers had no way to eat them. However, people in the tribe knew how to use tools to pull them out from the shells.

“You see, the shells are strong and tough. But after you take them back home and boil them in the water, the shells will soon turn fragile. In the past, some people tried to make use of their shells, but to their surprise, the shells turned very fragile after some time.” Mai said to Shao Xuan.

Although the river snails didn’t contain much energy individually, given its large quantity, it could help solve the food issue for sure. No wonder that Lang Ga was not worried about food.

According to Mai’s explanation, those river snails won’t come on shore on normal days. Only after the rainy season had begun, would they swim to the river bank in batches. The good thing was that those river snails didn’t have any way to attack, which made them the perfect foodsource during the rainy

seasons.

Shao Xuan did not know whether it had any parasites inside. But since people in the tribe had been dieting on them for years, it should be fine.

Since it was time for the shift change, Mai and the others did not stay long. After the whole night in the rain, all they wanted was to head back home to eat something, and go to sleep. After they were properly fed and rested, they would come here again to patrol.

“You just guard here, and whistle once you encounter anything abnormal that you can’t handle, okay?” Mai said to Lang Ga and the others.

“Got it. Just relax. It’s not like we are new at patrolling during the rainy season. I’ve filled Shao Xuan in with all the procedures. I’ll keep an eye on him. Don’t worry.” Lang Ga waved at Mai, and instantly rushed towards the bank to check on the fish fences that he set yesterday.

It kept raining all the time, and sometimes it was raining heavily, while sometimes it was not. The river had risen a lot higher than yesterday. The fish fence that was closest to the riverside was almost half sunk in the water.

If it’s like that, no fish would swim into it. It was still too early, and there was no abnormality on the surface of the river. So, Shao Xuan began to collect river snails like the others.

Shao Xuan had no idea what species those river snails belonged to, they looked different from one another. There were various circular patterns and colors. But Lang Ga said that they were all eatable. Shao Xuan did not mind that much, he would just grab them and toss them into the straw net once they swam to the bank. However, they stuck to the ground quite tightly, and when they were on some smooth stones, it would require some strength to pull them off.

They had been patrolling for almost half a day, but nothing had happened besides those river snails swimming to the shore. Nothing else was worth noticing. That day, Shao Xuan delivered many river snails to the kids in the orphan cave and Old Ke when he went back. He would not be able to eat them

all anyway. Caesar was not fond of them. Chacha was quite curious, but only for a while. All he cared about was to pull its flesh out of its shell for fun.

On the third day of Shao Xuan's patrolling, the first fish fence finally got completely submerged in the water. The first fish fence was not big, and the diameter was only about two meters. When they finished building it, both Shao Xuan and Lang Ga felt that it was a little small. But instead of rebuilding it, they let it be, and deliberately made the second fish fence much larger. Because of that, when the the first fish fence submerged completely, the second one only had part of it submerged in the water, as it was almost parallel with the first one.

"How is it?" Lang Ga tossed one river snail into his straw net, and shouted at Shao Xuan.

Shao Xuan stood next to the first fish fence, and carefully looked inside.

There was no fish....

Moreover, there was no activity to be spotted of the piranhas with giant heads and sharp teeth in the surroundings. In fact, there was no fish at all to be seen. It seemed that all the fish had vanished.

Oddly, in such a rainy season, no fish could be seen!

So, did that mean that the fish fences were made in vain?

No, they could see what the other things were in the river, besides the fish.

Just keep them. Shao Xuan looked at the fish fence beneath his feet, and decided to leave the fish fences as they were for now, and take them down when the tide ebbs. Anyway, they were no obstacles for the patrol.

"There's nothing!" Shao Xuan answered.

As he was about to head back to the land, Shao Xuan suddenly felt a chill sweeping through his back.

There was something dangerous!

When he was about to jump away from the fish fence and head towards the bank, he heard Lang Ga's urgent scream.

“Don’t move! No matter what! Do not move!”

Move, or don’t move? Those two options flashed in Shao Xuan’s mind quickly. In the end, he chose to do as Lang Ga commanded, which was standing there still.

Although Shao Xuan did not move, all the muscles on his body were well prepared. Once something went south, he would act on his instinct, his hand had almost reached the stone knife earlier.

Over there, Lang Ga had no mood for collecting river snails, and he was running towards Shao Xuan together with the others. While running, he tossed the river snail he was holding towards a spot about thirty meters away from where Shao Xuan was.

Shao Xuan could hear the river snail dropping into the water. But the needle-like glare was still there. Shao Xuan stood there still, remaining at where he was, rock steady.

If he looked up, he could see where the icy glare came from. But at that moment, Shao Xuan held his curiosity back, and did not look around.

Somewhere not far away from Shao Xuan, don’t know since when, a triangular head had appeared above the water silently. On the head, there were a pair of puffy, beady eyes.

At that time, a not so big sound came from the water ahead. It was not obvious in the sounds of the rain, but Shao Xuan heard it clearly.

“Ribbit!”

Shao Xuan: “.....”

What the fuck!

Finally, he realized why Lang Ga asked him not to move.

# Chapter 91 – Changes in the rainy season

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Lang Ga and the others were trying to attract its attention.

Shao Xuan could feel its sight fixed on himself, and finally it looked away after staring at him for about two minutes.

“Run, Ah-Xuan, run!” Lang Ga shouted from the other side.

In fact, Lang Ga didn’t need to shout. Shao Xuan’s legs suddenly bent his knees and then jumped up high with all his strength the second when it looked away. He basically ejected himself in the blink of an eye.

Kah!

The stone pillar that he stood on immediately cracked on the top, while Shao Xuan’s body shot out like an arrow.

The moment Shao Xuan moved away from the stone pillar, he glimpsed a long shadow which shot out and promptly retracted back. If Shao Xuan was a little slower, he would probably have been pulled down by the long shadow.

Shao Xuan knew what that long shadow was. If touched by it, he would’ve been dragged into the water.

Meanwhile, Lang Ga and the others had tossed the long spears they had at hand towards the creature in the river. Earlier, they dared not to do that, because Shao Xuan was standing in a really delicate position, and he could easily get hurt accidentally. Now, since Shao Xuan was not there anymore, they did not need to be overcautious. The veins on their upper arms popped up as they tossed out the long spears.

Stone spears flew through the curtains of rain, and Shao Xuan could hear the “whoosh” sounds as the spears flew in the air.

Puff! Puff! Puff!

Three long spears stabbed into the creature’s body, and red blood poured out immediately after that. If those piranhas were around, they would already have gathered around by the attraction of fresh blood. However, now, except for the struggling noise made by that injured creature, there was nothing else.

Whoosh, whoosh!

Another two long spears were tossed there.

Long straw ropes were attached at the end of the long spears. Apparently, they were attached so that the wounded game could be dragged to the bank.

As people dragged it up with the straw ropes, Shao Xuan finally got to see what that thing looked like.

And although like his earlier speculation, the thing that was dragged to the bank did look like a frog, but surprisedly it also had a long tail!

Was it a tadpole? The kind that hadn’t grown into a frog, but had the limbs?

Judging by its call earlier, Shao Xuan did not expect to see something like this.

The long-tailed frog that had become a pincushion was still struggling, but not as strongly as before. Its four limbs were thrashing around, leaving trails on the bank.

When the long-tailed frog was stabbed once again and stopped struggling, Shao Xuan went closer for a detailed observation.

Aside from the long tail, its four feet were fully webbed, and were not very toe-like. When you force-opened its mouth, there were sharp teeth inside. Besides that, the rest of it looked exactly like a mature frog.

Not only that, the size of the long-tailed frog surprised Shao Xuan a lot. If the long tail was not included, its body was over five meters long! No wonder that Lang Ga and the others were so nervous.

It was Shao Xuan’s first time seeing such a big frog with a long tail and sharp

teeth.

“You almost frightened me to death!” Seeing that Shao Xuan was unharmed, Lang Ga was quite relieved. He warned Shao Xuan, “Now that this thing came out, you need to be extra cautious from now on. Do not go to check on the fish fences for now.”

Whether they could catch any fish was not a big deal. The important thing was their own safety.

Lang Ga still had a lingering fear, for he did not expect the thing to come out so quickly. When he saw those two bloated eyes appear in the water near Shao Xuan. Lang Ga felt as if a jar of icy water was poured on his body.

Some people in the patrolling team had been dragged into the river in the past, and none of them ever returned alive. Even though people became more careful lately, and they were able to kill some of them every year, they would still be dragged down once they reduced their vigilance. You cannot let down your guard in front of the game.

Watching the others kill and dissect the long tailed frog, Lang Ga shared more things with him about the things he needs to pay attention to. Also, he told him some tragedies that happened in the past, to draw Shao Xuan’s attention.

“But this thing has its merits. It’s delicious! We can now kill some of them, but in a few days it will become very hard.” Said Lang Ga.

On that day, Shao Xuan killed three long tailed frogs together with the others. Those three frogs had different patterns and colors, but all of them had long tails, and seemed to belong to the same strange species.

People in the same duty all shared the meat, and later, they brought some of the frog meat back after finishing patrolling. It was delicious. Although it was not as tender as the frog meat that Shao Xuan had tried in his last life, it contained more energy than the river snails.

The rainy season was relatively shorter than winter. But it was not just a day or two. The rainy season would last for about thirty days. No one could say the exact date, for each year it varied.

Two days later, the unceasing rain made the river grow a lot.

Shao Xuan speculated that based on that rising trend, in less than ten days, the river will rise over the stone line. However, seeing their behavior, the others didn't seem to be scared at all.

When Shao Xuan was patrolling again, he could see a large amount of triangular heads and bloated eyes along the river bank line

No wonder that Lang Ga said that later they would be difficult to catch. So many long-tailed frogs...Rather than pulling them to the shore, they would pull you down into the water..

When there was nothing else to do, Lang Ga would stuff mud into the empty shells, and toss them towards the frogs to watch the frogs snatch them with their long tongues. Just like the frogs that Shao Xuan knew in his last life, those long-tailed frogs would capture moving objects. Most of the times, before the shells fell into the water, they would be snatched with the long tongues.

Those long tailed frogs never came on the shore, they would at most stand in the shallow waters, with their triangular heads and bloated eyes revealed above the water. Unlike in Shao Xuan's old memory, they barely made calls. Occasionally, a loud "Quack" could be heard.

With the rising river, every time when Shao Xuan went patrolling, the patrolling line would be drawn back a little. Because of the existence of those long tailed frogs, they needed to maintain a safe distance from the river.

Until one day when Shao Xuan came towards the riverbank, he found that those long tailed frogs near the river bank had all disappeared. He also noticed that the river, that had risen to the seventh fish fence, had begun to recede.

The rainy season was not over yet as Lang Ga told Shao Xuan. It was merely the first ebb of this rainy season. In the coming days, there would be more ebbs in this rainy season. But after the first ebb, all those long-tailed frogs would all disappear, and never come back again until the next rainy season.

In the meantime, Shao Xuan noticed that when the river was ebbing, the obvious trend of the flowing direction of the river seemed to have changed. As Shao Xuan speculated, nowadays, the river was not flowing in the same



direction as those lords of the river, but it was flowing what was before upstream.

The altered flowing direction, and the long-tailed frogs that disappeared overnight, both told Shao Xuan that something happened upstream of the river. Per Lang Ga's theory, there would be quite a few times that the river would ebb, and along with every ebb of the river, the flowing direction of the river would alter. A lot of strange things were happening during every rainy season. [Who can make a guess at what might have happened? Quite a few hints were dropped, not saying that it might be relevant to the story in the future. Maybe it might, maybe not.]

Just because of those weird phenomena, people in the tribe felt that the limitless mysterious river became even more mysterious. The whole time, they were reluctant to explore, for they did not dare to explore.

During the first ebb, Shao Xuan found a wood-eating insect in the seventh fish fence.

Shao Xuan personally set the seventh fish fence, and he placed a few bulks of wood inside the fish fence. Unexpectedly, this sudden ebb trapped a few wood-eating insects inside.

The wood-eating insect was like a ball of mucus. When they smelled wood, they would quickly attach to the wood, or just drag the wood down after the insect changed its shape.

However, Shao Xuan noticed that there were a lot of trees growing in a place that was flooded by the water, but they were not chewed on much. But if you tossed a bulk of wood into the river, in over an hour, you could see it being dragged down. Normally, the wood bulk would disappear from the surface within two minutes.

Apparently, those wood-eating insects were acting abnormally during rainy seasons.

So, every time when Shao Xuan was patrolling, he would place a piece of wood on the river to see how long it would take for it to be dragged down. On the wood bulk, he attached a thin straw rope, with the other end tied on a stone pillar so that the wood bulk doesn't drift away. When he returns home

that day, he would write the observation down in his secret notebook.

This rainy season only lasted for twenty-seven days, and it was shorter than last year. It was a normal situation. According to the experienced warriors, the longest rainy season in their lives lasted for about forty days, while the shortest rainy season was no more than twenty-five days.

When it stopped raining and the haunting dark clouds finally faded away, the precious sun finally shined again above people's heads. Everyone in the tribe was feeling refreshed from the fine weather.

Having been cooped up in their houses for nearly thirty days, the kids now were running around excitedly outside their houses. Children in the orphan cave also began to prepare things again. With the end of the rainy season, they could start fishing as usual. Temporarily, they did not have to worry about the disturbing noises that might hurt their chests.

Why temporarily?

Because, the disappeared water demons would appear again after some time, and then they would scream again.

"Let's go, Ah-Xuan!"

Lang Ga and the others were packing their things and preparing to leave.

"I'm almost done! You guys go ahead!" Shao Xuan answered.

After the rainy season ended, you weren't in danger anymore so long you didn't step into the river. So, Lang Ga and the others were not worried.

When Lang Ga and the others had left, Shao Xuan took out a small wooden boat from the animal skin bag. It was made by him during these last few days after he came back from his patrolling duties. It was a simple sailboat, and he made it with some wood he had and some tiny stone needles.

The sail was made from the leaf of some plant, and the wood planks were all normal timbers. The body of the little sailboat was only two palm's long.

The wind was blowing from the bank towards the river. Shao Xuan placed the simple little sailing boat on the surface of the river. With a slight push from his fingers, the little boat moved away from the bank and was sailing away from

the shore, drifting towards the center of the limitless river. The dot of green on the boat was particularly conspicuous.

There were a lot of piranhas in the river. Those big fellows with low IQ, that had disappeared during the whole rainy season, had now finally come back, and became more active than before. One single slice of meat or blood would cause chaos for a long time within the river. They were very energetic. Luckily, they had no interest in wood, while the wood-eating insects that were obsessed with wooden objects seemed to have disappeared.

After standing on the bank staring at the green dot for a while, Shao Xuan collected his things and left. When he was climbing up the mountain, he looked back at the river and could still see the little dot drifting away.

# Chapter 92 – Boomerang

---

Translated by Sunyancai

When the rainy season ended, it was Ta's hunting team's turn to go out hunting.

This time, Shao Xuan was in Mai's hunting group. Before they went out for hunting, every one gathered together on the mountaintop to sing the Song of Hunting. Ta said nothing when seeing Shao Xuan. He was in a bad mood, but still, he dared not to act it out obviously.

Perhaps, the Shaman had already talked to him, which left him no other choice but to swallow his anger. He would be considered disrespectful to the Shaman once he revealed any traces of dissatisfaction.

Ta had no choice but to take a deep breath and carry on. He assumed that they could gather more plants even without Shao Xuan's help. At the very least, some warriors in the advance group also knew how to set traps if setting traps was required. Unless the ancestors would only bless Shao Xuan, and turn a blind eye to the real elites of the tribe? He did not believe that.

The others in the hunting team were also staring at Shao Xuan curiously, especially those young warriors. Apparently, they were mocking him secretly, and their looks seemed to say: Look at that! I knew that this guy would get kicked out from the advance group! I knew it!

Lang Ga worried that Shao Xuan might think too much, and he kept comforting him all the way up to the mountaintop. However, he had no idea that Shao Xuan did not care about it at all. And he was the one who made the proposal.

Caesar and Chacha were both left in Old Ke's place, so was the remaining food. There was still something stored in the ice cave near the mountaintop, so there was no way that they would ever starve.

This time, the hunting period for them was relatively tight, so right at the end of the rainy season, Ta quickly summoned the hunting group leaders, and had them be prepared for the next hunting mission.

They had to be back to the tribe before the full moon, because at that period, the ferocious beasts in the forests would become even more irascible. So, based on the experiences they had in the past, whichever hunting team had the mission, it should be return before the full moon. The sooner, the better.

Last time when Shao Xuan was hunting with Mai's hunting group, they stopped at the second location because they had found the ancestors. However, this time, the hunting i the first and the second location was smooth. So, Shao Xuan followed them to the third location.

There were a lot of lakes in the third location. Since the rainy season had just passed, some lakes became even larger, and there were some new smaller lakes around.

Many beasts, including many ferocious beasts, would come out after the rainy season. With the hunting experience that he had gathered before, and due to the fact that he was much stronger now, Shao Xuan had a good harvest. Since he had put down many high-level game, this time the food he had could support him for over fifty days.

In the tribe, Old Ke was not as worried as the last two times. After careful thinking, Old Ke found that it was because this time, Shao Xuan did not say the words "rest assured" before he set off.

Well, it was true. This time, the hunting mission went quite smoothly, and Shao Xuan tried with his full ability. He assisted the others, filled the leaks, and set a lot of traps. He was no longer a walk-over character. In fact, Shao Xuan was very satisfied with this fruitful, enjoyable hunting trip.

The only difference there was from the earlier hunting trips was that, as the time went by, the moons at night became brighter and brighter. At night, the forest was a little shiny as if it was covered by a layer of silver silk. The vision

was not as dark as well. But similarly, nocturnal animals and ferocious beasts tended to be more irritable. Roars and cries of beasts and other animals could be heard, both day and night, and they were more frequent than before.

After twenty days, the hunting team returned to the tribe.

Because of the frequent riots of ferocious beasts, many people in each hunting groups were injured. Luckily, they were well prepared for the unpredictable accidents. Only three of the warriors were badly injured, even though many others were hurt as well. Considering the tough situation that they were all in, three was a lucky number. Fortunately, no one in Mai's hunting group was severely injured.

When they were heading back to the tribe, Shao Xuan noticed that the river's water-level dropped a lot as they reached the river in the mountain foot area.

The fish fences were still there. The first fish fence was near the river surface originally. When the rainy season ended, the rising river dropped again, and it was only a little higher than it was before the rainy season. So, the first fish fence was in the water.

However, now after twenty days, they returned, only to find that the water-level dropped sharply, and it was even lower than before!

"It's almost the full moon, and the river would drop more in the following few days." Said Lang Ga.

At second thought, Lang Ga smiled, "The fish fences that we made did not catch anything in the rainy season, but they might work after this full moon."

The peculiar thing about this world were the two moons at night. They only become full moons once in a year, when they would move to each other's direction, until they met, overlapped, separated, and then went in different directions.

When the moons were full, it was the time for them to overlap.

Last year at the same time, Shao Xuan was spending most of his time in the orphan cave like the other kids. They were nowhere near the river, so naturally, they did not see the rising and sinking tides. Although many people began to start fishing after the rainy season, but they were not allowed to touch the

water when the river dropped. They needed to remain in the caves.

After taking care of the game, Shao Xuan took Caesar and Chacha back to his place.

“They were a little manic, you should pay attention to it.” Said Old Ke.

Shao Xuan glimpsed at the bones in the corner. The long ribs were chewed into small pieces, Caesar didn’t eat them, but left them there. There were marks of claws on the ground. However, Chacha, who was very active before, on the other hand, now became very quiet. In the past, he would try to peck on everything he saw, and sometimes clutched on those things while chirping. But now, he became very quiet and still. When he was not sleeping, he would just stay in his nest, not going anywhere.

Shao Xuan got back to his cabin, looking at overactive Caesar, and then the abnormally quiet Chacha. He thought for a while, and took out his knife to make something.

During this hunting mission, a tree’s leaf reminded Shao Xuan of something.

The Flying-around dart, also called boomerang, was something that Shao Xuan used to play with in his previous life. It could be made from paper. But since he was now in the tribe, he chose to make it with wood.

The boomerang that Shao Xuan made was in the shape of the character “V”. Because he became familiar with making stoneware and woodware, it was not so difficult for him to make such a boomerang. He knew how to do that.

It took him less than an hour to finish his work. After some more detailed polishing, Shao Xuan took his end-product outside.

“Come out, Caesar!”

He called Caesar out, as Caesar was walking around howling in the cabin earlier. Shao Xuan tapped on the wolf’s head with the boomerang, and said, “I toss it out, and you fetch it back for me.”

In the past, he had done the go-fetch training with Caesar. Sometimes, Shao Xuan would throw a stick or a bone out, for Caesar to fetch. So, Caesar was not

alien with this game.

Seeing that Caesar began to stare at the boomerang in his hand, Shao Xuan knew that he was prepared, so he tossed it out hard.

The boomerang that was tossed out, quickly flew away, but soon enough, it flew back to Shao Xuan after flying around a large circle on the left.

Caesar kept running after the boomerang in a circle, and now he was very confused. Why could this thing come back to the starting point?! When Shao Xuan tossed it out again, he quickly followed the boomerang to see where it went.

“What?!”

Tuo and Keke came to see Shao Xuan. But all they saw was that Shao Xuan throwing a piece of wood out, and the wood would oddly come back to Shao Xuan after flying around. How astonishing!

“What is this?!” Tuo approached Shao Xuan and asked curiously.

They had a good harvest during this hunting mission, and the things that they collected were very sizable compared with their earlier hunting missions. However, the quality was not as satisfying as the quantity. Last time, they had brought the Green Thief and the Wind Ball back! They even set traps outside every night when they were in the hunting mission, but nothing was obtained. Some of the traps were destroyed by some unknown objects. Tuo and Keke came to Shao Xuan, just to ask him whether he would be interested in rejoining the advance group. However, unexpectedly, they saw something new and curious as they came by.

“This is called a boomerang.” Shao Xuan said.

“Well...may I have a try?” Tuo itched to try it himself.

“Sure.” Shao Xuan passed the boomerang to Tuo, and told him the trick to throw it properly.

.....

“Are you sure that it will come back instead of getting lost in the woods?” Tuo was not so confident about the outcome. After all, he was used to throwing



stone spearheads and darts. He had the feeling that the thing he threw out would fly to somewhere afar, well, about flying back...

“I’m sure.” Shao Xuan promised.

“Okay, then I’ll try it first.”

Tuo threw it out gently, and he was much relieved to see that this thing did come back to him. On the second time, he threw it harder.

Keke kept his eyes wide open as he stood right beside Tuo without blinking. With his own eyes, he saw the piece of wood fly back after Tuo threw it out. He rubbed his palms and swallowed his saliva, “Let me try it!”

Keke promptly took the boomerang as it flew back to Tuo. However, the result of Keke’s taking over was that, before the boomerang could be thrown out again, it was broken by accident.

# Chapter 93 – The overlapping of the two moons

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Keke was brought away by Tuo, but only after he got beaten up as hell.

Before they left, Tuo and Keke both promised that they would pay Shao Xuan a lot of food if Shao Xuan helped make another two for them.

Boomerangs were said to have been invented by indigenous people, but here, it was of no big help at hunting, given that there were quite a lot of ferocious beasts in the forests. Boomerangs had no actual lethal power to them.

However, it could be used to drive away the irrelevant animals and birds, or to be used as bait to draw the attention of ferocious beasts.

As for the question brought up by Tuo before he left, about whether he would be willing to rejoin the advance group, Shao Xuan provided no absolute answer. Because, what he wanted to do for now was to upgrade his strength.

Tuo and Keke might not have come here under Ta's order, but Ta must have known it in advance, and he did not stop them from coming.

No matter what Ta was thinking, Shao Xuan had no intention in rejoining the advance group, for he felt more comfortable staying in Mai's hunting group. Because of Shao Xuan's harvest and merits before, the Shaman would provide him with the herbs he needed. Shao Xuan had given all the herbs to Old Ke, and Old Ke looked far better than last few years.

When he came back to himself, he saw Caesar sitting on the ground, staring at the broken boomerang. Shao Xuan went over to collect the broken

boomerang and threw it inside to be used as firewood. He tapped on the wolf's head gently as comfort, "I'll make a new one for you tomorrow."

Perhaps because of the exercise during the day, Caesar's energy was consumed a lot, and he became a lot quieter at night.

Shao Xuan stood at his door, staring at the sky.

The moons were almost round, and they were gradually overlapping. According to the stories of experienced old warriors, the river would sink quickly once the two moons joined.

The change was pretty obvious.

In the following day, when Shao Xuan came to the riverside, he noticed that the water-level had indeed dropped a lot. The river was running towards the regular downstream rapidly, as if the water was being flushed somewhere.

would "disappear" when the moons turned full.

After the river dropped, a lot of silt was revealed to the outside. People could even see something moving around inside that silt. Sometimes, some unknown birds would fly into those silts and peck into the dirt. But occasionally, some giant mouth would open from the silts and drag the flying bird into the mud.

Even if there was only silt left, it was still a very dangerous place. No wonder that the leadership of the tribe forbade people from getting near the riverside. Not only was it easy to sink into the sediment, the creatures hiding in the dirt were also a big threat.

In the following few days, the two moons would gradually overlap each other some more, and the river would be flowing more rapidly, and sink even more rapidly. Now, when you stood beside the first fish fence, you would see nothing aside from the silt. However, if it weren't for the dropped water-level, people would never have been able to see what it was like at the riverbed.

Besides silt, there were some odd-looking river plants standing there, just like coral. Some other river plants could move like ordinary aquatic plants.

Less than ten meters ahead of the first fish fence, there was a steep slope, while a hundred meters away, it became very deep. People even had the feeling

that they couldn't see the bottom.

Because the lords of the river lived in it, it was definitely not a normal river. It was hard to imagine how deep the river actually was.

Before the water "vanished", Shao Xuan would toss a piece of wood into the river, and watch it drift away downstream. Before they went too far to be seen, none of the woods sank. Obviously, the wood-eating creatures were not in the river anymore for now.

With the complete overlap of the moons approaching, Caesar and Chacha were not the only ones that became more and more abnormal. The night swallows were more ferocious than ever.

Other people could not hear the screams of the night swallows, but Shao Xuan could. He could hear traces of excitement in their calls. It was a thirst for blood, a maddening thirst for blood, which helped them overcome their fear of fire. Even when someone traveled at night with a torch in their hand, he would still be madly attacked by the night swallows. Many night swallows would be burnt because of that, but they were acting as if all they could see was the target of the attack.

Caesar would also keep howling at night in these days, just like the wolves in the forest. Last year, Caesar's symptoms were not so obvious because of his young age. But this year, things were different.

At first, the patrolling warriors thought that some wolf packs might have entered the tribe, but they realized that it was Caesar after they had seen him with their own eyes. Because, Caesar didn't used to howl in the past.

Chacha would remain in his nest and not go nowhere, doing nothing, as if he thought that outside was dangerous. Shao Xuan would even have assume him to be sick if he hadn't had a growing appetite.

However, the big river down the mountain was gradually disappearing. The most intuitive feeling that people had was that the water was going away, as if there never was such a big river down the mountain, and the only thing left was an abyss filled with silt.

If you raised your head and look afar, you would find nothing. No river, no bank, no boundary.

If he hadn't been warned about this by some experienced old warriors, Shao Xuan would have had a psychological panic of the unknown because of the abnormal phenomenon.

At the very night that the two moons fully overlapped, it was as bright as day.

After the two moons overlapped, it looked like that they were merged together into a larger moon.

One giant round moon hanging in the sky, it was like huge pale eyeball looking down at everything down below.

At that night, night swallows were wildly dancing above the empty riverbed, but they never returned to the tribe.

On the mountaintop of the tribe, the Shaman was murmuring something beside the fire pit. While inside the fire pit, the originally small ball of flame had grown into a big one, which filled up the whole fire pit. The tall flames kept dancing in the air, which made the mountaintop look like a massive torch. It somehow lightened people's mood and eased their nerves.

It was horribly quite in the whole tribe. Aside from the Shaman, who was standing on the mountaintop, no one was allowed outside. Shao Xuan had been told to stay in his cabin and behave himself, long before tonight. Caesar was howling in the room, while Chacha curled himself up in a ball of feather in his nest. He would totally shrink his head under his shoulders if he could.

Even in the cabin, they could hear the vague roars of animals from the forest afar.

People only came out the next day, when the moons disappeared and the sun came out. Everyone had a delightful expression on their faces. The overlapping of two moons clearly did not have any actual harm physically, but the sense of fear that it created had clouded everyone's heart. They could only find comfort in the flame on the mountaintop. Now, with the two overlapped moons gone, everyone seemed to have come back to life again.

On the following night of the overlapping of the two moons, there was also

only one moon in the sky, but not as large as the night before. If you watched closely, you could slightly see the two moons slowly separating.

While in the late night, Shao Xuan noticed that the ground beneath his feet was trembling, and it was getting worse and worse. He had learned some more about the events from Old Ke, so he was not worried this time. Thinking about last year when he was still in the orphan cave, he thought it was an earthquake, so he ran outside the cave, but got dragged back in and got laughed at by the other kids.

Late at night, Shao Xuan was awoken up by the trembling ground again. Along with the trembling, there were loud noises, like ten thousand horses galloping together, very overwhelming.

It became more and more moist, for more and more vapor was forming in the air.

The wind was blowing hard outside, and gravel was thrown around, hitting the wooden walls, which created cracking sounds. Shao Xuan even wondered whether the wooden walls would be pierced through by the gravel.

The rumbling noise grew bigger.

The rumbling sound, accompanied by severe tremors on the ground beneath one's feet, and the moist air...Obviously, like the experienced old warriors had said, the "disappeared" river was coming back.

After a while.

"Woo~~!"

It was a shrill scream, and it stood out in the midst of the rumbling sounds. Right after the whistle-like shrill scream, came the familiar thundering sound, which covered the earlier rumbling. It was the declaration of the lord, and all other sounds must show deference!

However, it was like a signal, a signal of a glorious return.

All those creatures that disappeared during the rainy season, all came back with the water.

The rumbling sound gradually faded away, but the voice of the lords of the

river rang all night. It was believed that many people in the tribe had a sleepless night, just like Shao Xuan did.

# Chapter 94 – Speculation

---

Translated by Sunyancai

In the morning, Shao Xuan saw Lang Ga running towards him breathlessly as soon as he went outside the door.

“Ah-Xuan, quick! Come to the riverside, now!”

Lang Ga was red-faced, perhaps he had done a lot of work, or perhaps he was just too excited.

“What’s wrong?” Shao Xuan was curious.

“The fish fences! The fish fences!” Lang Ga said no more, but came and dragged Shao Xuan, running towards the river.

Early in the morning today, when the day was still a little dim, Lang Ga came to the riverside to check on those fish fences. Judging from his experiences in the past few year, he knew that there would be huge tides last night, and he thought that there was a slight chance that the fish fences could trap something inside. Because for the last two days, people’s hearts were so calm, so he did not disturb Shao Xuan. Today, as he couldn’t wait to check on the fish fences, he found that there were a lot of aquatic organisms inside!

There were piranhas with giant heads, but there was more; creatures that they had never seen in the past.

Lang Ga was so excited, that he immediately checked on every fish fence along the river. Later, he called on some patrolling warriors to help him slaughter the few fishes that almost got away from the fish fences, and they decided to leave the others fishes in the fish fences as they were. Because he



had been excited for quite a long time, all his attention was fixed on the things in the trap. Only then did Lang Ga think about Shao Xuan, so he quickly ran to Shao Xuan's place to call him over

Last night, the water rose again, and the river became as quiet as before, as if the abyss of 2 days before was just a dream.

When Shao Xuan finally came to the riverside, there were already a lot of people surrounding the fish fences. Some of them were patrolling warriors, and some of them were just residents in the mountain foot area. Kids from the orphan cave also came by to see the wonder.

People all had curiosity, and they liked to watch the hustle and bustle as well. In the meantime, people realized that many good things could be captured once they build something similar in the right time of the year.

When Shao Xuan came by, he noticed a one-meter-long mussel, pried open already, and left on the ground.

"I came across that thing in the morning, almost let it get away. Luckily, it was not fast." Lang Ga chuckled, "That thing had real tight shells, and I went through a lot of trouble to open it up."

Lang Ga pushed away those people standing in front of them, and pointed at one fish fence while explaining to Shao Xuan excitedly: "Look, Ah-Xuan! There are so many creatures inside! Some of them have never been seen before!"

Being a hunter with over ten years of hunting experience, naturally, Lang Ga, like the other warriors, was very interested in newly found catch, and he had dissected many of them in the morning himself.

Shao Xuan jumped up to the top of a stone pillar and glanced inside.

There were creatures in every fish fence, and most of them were piranhas. They were all brought by the giant waves.

Lang Ga had no interest for those giant-headed piranhas, and he only kept two of them as a gesture. After talking with Shao Xuan, he decided to distribute all the remaining piranhas to the kids and other residents in the mountain foot district. Lang Ga was in no lack of such food after all, and he did not care for the meat with low energy value. Shao Xuan was in the same situation.

Lang Ga used the long spears to poke out the piranhas inside the fish fence. For every stab, he would pull out one piranha and toss it to the other side.

All the onlookers had merely come to check if those big headed fish had returned. If they did, people could finally prepare to do the fishing for the coming days. Unexpectedly, they had gained some food for just coming here. Seeing that Lang Ga was pulling those piranhas out, they all came forward to collect them.

There was no water in the fish fences, and many of the fish had died due to struggle. The blood that Lang Ga caused when forking those fish out, made the fish' combat even more fierce.

Shao Xuan saw a lot of fish of various shapes. Some had long and narrow eyes, some had flat bodies like the manta rays, and some were like pufferfish, which could stuff themselves with air and push all the other fishes to the corners.

Shao Xuan even saw shrimps and crabs in the fish fence. However, they were not the same shrimps and crabs as those in Shao Xuan's previous life. Compared with the other fishes, they were not so large. Indeed, if there were larger shrimps and crabs, they would not have been trapped by this simple fish fence. Even if they came here last night, they wouldn't even have seen their shadows.

"How's this one? I think it's edible."

"Hey, this one is nice! Looks ferocious! We can play with it even if it's not edible!"

"Check on that fish, it changes color once you poke at it!"

"....."

People were chatting in the surroundings. Shao Xuan was observing while he heard Lang Ga shout from the other fish fence, "I think I have seen that while hunting! But not totally the same...."

Shao Xuan looked at where he pointed, and suddenly he laughed once he saw the thing that Lang Ga was pointing at.

Oh, my goodness, there was a turtle!

Specifically, it looked more like a crocodile turtle. When Shao Xuan was looking at it, it was biting the tail of a big piranha and directly tore a slice of meat off.

“I’ll keep that one and cook it in my cabin!” Shao Xuan pointed at the crocodile turtle with his long spear and said to Lang Ga.

“Okay, then it’s yours.” Lang Ga was thrilled with today’s harvest, and he could not care less about this thing that he had seen in the past. In fact, he was now paying no attention to whether the things he caught were edible or how much energy they contained. He felt that it was a very glorious thing to be surrounded by people like that. It was a sense of accomplishment, as if he were walking on the path of glory again.

Check on that! I can not only set ground traps! I can set traps to catch fish as well!

Lang Ga was acting as a commander there, and many residents in the mountain foot district were surrounding him, learning from him. Lang Ga stood on the stone pillar of the fish fence, and he had been talking ever since he got there.

Shao Xuan looked around, and he chose not to steal Lang Ga’s spotlight. Although he and Lang Ga were the joint owners of the catch, all he wanted to see was what else there was in the river besides those piranhas. Aside from that crocodile turtle and a few fish in the fish fence, he left all the other things at Lang Ga’s disposal.

Shao Xuan squeezed out from the crowd and walked along the riverside.

In the little woods near the river, many branches were broken. Maybe that was caused by last night.

When the water rose, clearly there would be big tides. There were obvious marks that indicated that the bank had been washed, and the things in the fish fences were brought back by the tides.

There were no broken branches in the water, and there were no floating things on the river.

Shao Xuan walked into the woods. He broke off a branch and tossed it into the river.

The branch floated on the surface and drifted along the tides. But after only a few breaths' time, the branch sank, and a series of bubbles came up.

Those wood-eating worms had returned as well.

During the rainy season, perhaps those worms had swum downstream together with the river monsters, or perhaps, like those long-tailed frogs, they had their own places to go to. But after the full moon, they had returned with the water.

If his speculation was right, Shao Xuan believed that maybe a boat could float in the river safely from the end of the rainy season to the full moon.

In the middle of that period, the river seemed very rough, but only those piranhas were active. There was a saying, that the monkey reigns in the mountains when the tiger is absent. It made sense. Without their natural predators, of course those piranhas would stay active all day long, and they would fight each other over slight traces of blood.

Shao Xuan could not confirm whether the truth was the same as his speculation. It was a shame that this phenomenon only happened once a year. He had to wait until the next rainy season to confirm his theory.

When he got back to the cabin, Shao Xuan carefully recorded today's observation and his speculation in his secret notebook. After he was done, he carefully rolled the animal skin roll, and tied it with a leather rope, before placing it into a stone box. He sealed it, and put the stone box under his bed.

There were a lot of things recorded in that animal skin roll. For now, Shao Xuan could not let the others in the tribe learn about it, for the information inside would probably cause a panic, as well as some unnecessary troubles. Now, since Shao Xuan's strength was limited, he could not bear the consequences. So, there was no other option but to keep it well-hidden.

"Hopefully, it will be useful someday in the future." Shao Xuan whispered to himself.

Is their tribe the only tribe in this world?

Now, everyone in the tribe, together with their ancestors, had only had connections with the other people in this tribe for their whole lives. From birth to death, no one had ever encountered any outsider. When they talked about the other tribes, it was like when people were talking about aliens in Shao Xuan's previous life. It was too remote, and aliens only existed in legends instead of in real life.

Where were the others? Were they any other people besides them? Shao Xuan could see something from the pictures on the stone room's walls.

But, how could he get out from this tribe and meet someone from other tribes?

Perhaps he had to travel through that dangerous forest to go further. Or perhaps, all he needed to do was to travel across the river...

# Chapter 95 – Intention

---

Translated by Sunyancai

When everything in the tribe went back to normal, Shao Xuan's life resumed its old pattern.

He would go out on hunting trips every twenty or thirty days, then return to the tribe, and do stone crafting, learn about setting traps from Old Ke, and train with Caesar and Chacha.

In the blink of an eye, half a year passed by. During that time, Shao Xuan extended out his cabin. Under the guidance of Old Ke, he even integrated stone materials into his cabin, and turned his little shelter into a wood-stone house. It was tougher than before. In the aspect of architecture, he indeed wasn't as talented as Old Ke and the others. So, all he could do was to build the house following Old Ke's guidance.

The newly-built wooden stone house was one time larger than Old Ke's place, and even had space for a separate stone crafting workshop. Old Ke's equipment had already been moved into that room. When Shao Xuan was doing the stone crafting, Old Ke would just sleep in the next room. He didn't mind the noise, and would always come to teach Shao Xuan a thing or two when he woke up.

When Shao Xuan went out hunting, Old Ke would constantly sit beside the window to bathe under the sun when he wasn't doing stone crafting or training Caesar and Chacha. Every time Ge stopped by, he would sigh with satisfaction, seeing that Old Ke was enjoying his life like that. Just over a year ago, who would have expected Old Ke to have such changes in his life?

Chacha was growing fast. It had been almost half a year since it hatched.

Caesar's den was built somewhere near the main door so he would be able to learn about the outside situation once there was movement. Shao Xuan was completely keeping him as a dog. However, Chacha had his nest built on the roof. Shao Xuan made it especially for Chacha.

With Chacha's presence, no night swallow would ever dare to get close to the house. Sometimes, a few night swallow's bodies would be found in the morning besides Chacha's nest. He had no intention of eating them. When he pecked them to pieces, he would take the remains to the river and drop them into the river for all those big-head piranhas to fight over the remains. He wasn't only fierce, but also had creepy hobbies.

Shao Xuan had always assumed that it would require help from a third party for the little bird to learn how to fly. For instance, someone might need to push the bird down from some edges. However, the truth was, Shao Xuan didn't need to worry about that at all. Chacha wasn't a good boy since its first day, and he became even naughtier as time went by. He often jumped down from the stone desk, and before Shao Xuan noticed it, Chacha learned how to fly, and he could fly decent enough. From morning till night, he would mess with Caesar by constantly pecking him. When Caesar was about to get serious, Chacha would immediately fly high up, so that Caesar wouldn't be able to do anything except let out his anger on the ground.

One time, when Shao Xuan got back from a hunting mission, he was summoned by the Shaman. At the mountaintop, when he took Chacha to the Shaman, he encountered Chief Ao, who was speaking with the Shaman about some matters.

Chief Ao said that Chacha might be the relative of a bird called Giant Mountain Eagle. He might even be a close relative of that eagle, but not as large as that. Even so, Chacha was still one of the predators, and compared with the other kinds of birds, he was big in size.

The first idea that Shao Xuan had when he learnt about that was...Well, no wonder he had such a fucking big appetite!

The little bastard could eat a lot while he was still a baby bird. Also, he was very picky. Now, as time went by, it grew larger and larger, and could now fly on

his own. But most of the times, he would get food from Shao Xuan, and would occasionally hunt for snacks, because Shao Xuan wouldn't allow him to fly too far.

As for the exact look of the Giant Mountain Eagle, Shao Xuan had no idea, for he had never seen it before. Most people in the tribe had never seen it, but it was said that in a place far away, there was an Eagle Mountain, and the Giant Mountain Eagle lived there.

With no confirmation on Chacha's species, Shao Xuan could only speculate his character based on the living habits and characters of Giant Mountain Eagle. If he really was a close relative as Chief Ao had said, then they must have something in common.

The Giant Mountain Eagle was famous for its cold-blood cruelty, and they would fight each other even if they were blood-related. When there was an inner fight, they wouldn't have a death fight. But for those non-related birds or animals, they would definitely aim for their lives. Even when they won, they would chase their competition to death in the end.

Based on Shao Xuan's observation, Chacha was developing the same character as the Giant Mountain Eagle. Luckily, he was tamed and trained since childhood, so his temperament was not so aggressive.

"Have you found good stone cores, again?"

Old Ke stood by the window, and he noticed Shao Xuan carrying back two giant stones from the training ground.

"Yep. I think they are good enough to make a few spearheads, and the remaining stone flakes can be made into stone needles for setting traps later."

Shao Xuan put the two stones into his workshop, and he heard the voice of a bird from outside when he finished drinking his water.

He went out the door, and stared at the bird circling above his head. He waved to the bird, and clearly, the bird received the signal, for he chirped in the sky and flew away.

"Chacha went out to play again?" asked Old Ke.



“Yeah. Luckily, he knows not to fly too far away, and he would return home when it’s time.” Shao Xuan came back home and sat down.

“He’s still young. When going out of the tribe, there are a lot of ferocious birds in the sky. Chacha is still no rival for them.” Old Ke was a little concerned.

“Don’t worry, he’s smart enough.” Said Shao Xuan.

He was not lying. Chacha indeed was full of wicked ideas. He was much smarter than Caesar and rarely would he be bullied.

Seeing that Caesar was following Shao Xuan from the training ground, Old Ke asked after a long silence, “Do you plan to take Caesar out onto the hunting field, since you have trained him so much?”

Shao Xuan nodded, “I intend to take him out for hunting next year.”

“Do you mean that?” Old Ke was still worried.

Although he had seen Caesar being trained by Shao Xuan during this year, and Caesar obviously had learned how to cooperate with Shao Xuan, the real hunting field was filled with danger. There were too many unpredictable factors, and any slight mistake could cause an irreversible effect.

“It’s only an intention of mine. I’ve heard from Uncle Mai that we might be hunting some rare prey next year, so I made the proposal to him. He said that he would think about it. But when the time comes, Caesar would need to make a performance in front of the other warriors.” In fact, Mai could totally decide on the affairs in the hunting group, and the others wouldn’t disobey him even if they had different opinions. However, Shao Xuan would like the others to fully understand Caesar’s capacity. It would be such a pity to waste good help.

Shao Xuan knew that there were some rare prey that would be difficult to track down, given that he had been participating in quite a few hunting missions. But with Caesar and his sharp sense of smell, the situation would become much easier.

Now, Caesar was doing very well in the aspect of speed. As for reacting, fighting and adapting...Shao Xuan and Caesar were still working on that.

Caesar was almost the same size as the wolves in the forest, but he lacked the bloodlust. No one in the tribe was afraid of Caesar now.

Since Shao Xuan made the decision, Old Ke wasn't planning to disturb him, "If he still needs more training, you may have more time to train him during the winter when the hunting period ends."

"Well, winter..." Shao Xuan looked at the few normal looking leaves that were left on the wooden shelf, "I'm afraid that this winter won't be relaxing."

He wanted to learn something about herbs from the Shaman, and he had mentioned about this idea when he was summoned by the Shaman. Since he had no idea whether it was a proper request to make, he tentatively raised the topic once in a euphemistic way. To his surprise, the Shaman agreed.

Many warriors in the advance group knew a thing or two about the usage of herbs, but none of them had any clear understanding of it. The others in the tribe had never brought up similar requests. Perhaps they thought that all they had to do was to trust the Shaman with his ideas, and they would ask for the Shaman's help when necessary, so they did not have to spend their own time on learning it. Or perhaps, they thought that only the Shaman was capable of learning something as advanced as that, and the others couldn't.

In fact, the Shaman was quite delighted when Shao Xuan brought up that he wanted to learn herbalism from him. However, normally, Shao Xuan's time was very limited. So, the Shaman asked him to come to the mountaintop in the winter, when there were no hunting missions.

That's why Shao Xuan said that he would be busy in this coming winter.

# Chapter 96 – A present for the Shaman

---

Translated by Sunyancai

With the end of the last hunting mission, it grew colder and colder as time went by.

Shao Xuan walked down from the mountaintop as he was dragging home the prey he hunted down during the last hunting trip.

The weather was colder than before, and winter was about thirty days away. He stored some of the food in the mountaintop storage cave, and brought down the remainder.

The other hunting team was preparing for their last hunting mission. They had to hurry up, because by the time they returned, it would official be winter.

Old Ke was meeting a friend in the mountainside district, and Caesar was waiting for him there as he would be Old Ke's ride for going back home. As for Chacha... Shao Xuan saw him flying through the sky on his way back to the tribe. However, hadn't seen him since the end of Sword Cleansing Ritual.

When stepping through the door, Shao Xuan noticed a falcon lying on the stone table. The eagle's head was at the edge of the table as it remained still. Shao Xuan became stunned for a moment, because he thought that the eagle's neck had been broken by someone. However, that thing immediately got up and jumped down from the table, as if it knew Shao Xuan came back. When flapping his wings, he knocked down quite a few wooden chairs around him.

Chacha had grown up, but he kept his old habits from his childhood. For example, lying on the edge of the stone desk, whilst throwing down everything else on the surface by flapping his wings. He got lectured by Shao Xuan a lot of

times, but old habits were still old habits.

Shao Xuan looked at the approaching eagle, and tossed him a slice of meat, “Eat it outside!”

Even though his cabin had been enlarged, there was still insufficient room for Chacha to flap his wings.

After Chacha left the cabin with the meat, Shao Xuan intended to process the remainder by pickling it. However, he checked the stone crock in the kitchen, and realized that it was already full.

Shao Xuan had made a separate space in the kitchen with a wooden plank. In the space laid a simple stone stove, and it was more convenient than setting up a stone pot every time.

Shao Xuan recalled that there was an empty stone crock in the corner, so he walked towards it and checked. It was an old stone crock brought by Old Ke. But it had aged a lot, and there was a crack on the opening part. Not much water could be contained within it, so it was only placed here temporarily, for later use.

There was a wooden cover on the stone crock. A layer of dust was on the cover, since no one had touched it in a long time.

Shao Xuan opened the wooden cover and looked inside, only to find a washbasin-sized thing staying quietly inside. It also had many jagged ridges on its back. The water inside the stone crock merely covered its back.

Shao Xuan realized what had happened only after he saw it.

This turtle was trapped in the fish fence on a night after the two moons overlapped and the water-level rose. Shao Xuan asked Lang Ga to leave him with that, for he wanted to make a pot of stew with it. However, later on, when Lang Ga came to deliver it, Shao Xuan directly tossed it into the old stone crock in Old Ke’s place. After that, because of series of events, such as hunting, enlarging the cabin, and moving, it was left here, totally ignored. Shao Xuan forgot about its existence and Old Ke did the same. So, it was left here until today.

When you counted properly, you’ll find that almost half a year had passed.

The turtle remained in the stone crock, and it was still alive!

Perhaps it almost starved to death, as it had no spirit at all. When Shao Xuan poked it twice with the wooden stick, it merely moved its body.

“Should I cook it today?” Shao Xuan thought.

As he was hesitating whether to cook it today, or keep it for another few days, Old Ke returned with Caesar.

When Old Ke came in, Shao Xuan asked, “Should we eat it today, or in a few days? What do you say?”

“What? It is still in there?” Old Ke was very surprised.

When Lang Ga delivered this turtle here, Shao Xuan said nothing about making it into a pot of stew. Moreover, with the experience of keeping Caesar and Chacha, Old Ke naturally assumed that Shao Xuan took this thing back to keep it as a pet. After all, he had a history of keeping food as pets, it wouldn't have been a surprise if he wanted to keep this one as well.

After putting it into the stone crock, Old Ke would refill the water every three or five days. And when he thought of it, he would toss some meat chunks into it. Old Ke thought that Shao Xuan would take care of it, but unexpectedly, Shao Xuan had already forgotten about it a long time ago. Later, when Shao Xuan's cabin was enlarged, Old Ke came and asked about the turtle again. Back then, he learnt that Shao Xuan had no intention of keeping it as a pet, but to store it as meal. So, he stopped feeding it since then. There was a differences between food and pets.

In the past, pets and food were the same thing in Old Ke's mind. Then, he got to spend time with Caesar and Chacha, and he gradually became attached to them. Caesar carried him everywhere, so of course he wouldn't let him starve. However, food was a different thing. In the minds of the people in the tribe, why would anyone waste food by feeding their meal?

It was left behind, until now.

“Yeah, I remembered. It was trapped by the fish fence along the river, on the

following night after the overlapping of the moons, when the water-level rose. I told Lang Ga to let me have it, so that I can stew it. But I forgot to cook it because I became busy after.” Shao Xuan explained.

“I’m surprised that it’s still alive! I’ve stopped feeding it for quite some time.” Old Ke sighed. After all, they were in no lack of food. Since the other stone crocks in the front were still full, no one would ever pay attention to the old stone crock in the corner.

“This creature had a habit of constant starvation. It can live long and well.” Shao Xuan said, and tossed a piece of fresh meat into the stone crock.

The turtle was usually timid, but it immediately bit into the meat. When its hooked mouth bit the meat, it pierced through the meat and pecked the stone crock because it used too much strength, creating a loud ‘Bang’.

Shao Xuan checked on the inner wall of the stone crock, and found that there were a bunch of scratches and bite marks all over its surface. If the stone crock didn’t have thick walls, perhaps it would’ve long been pecked through. Perhaps it contributed to the opening crack as well.

“Or, should we eat it today?” Shao Xuan turned to Old Ke and asked, but he found that Old Ke was staring at the turtle and was thinking about something.

“Ah-Xuan.” Old Ke said with his eyes fixed on the turtle in the stone crock.

“Yes?”

“Aren’t you going to learn from the Shaman during this winter?” asked Old Ke.

“That’s the plan. The Shaman agreed too.” Said Shao Xuan.

“You can present it to the Shaman.” Old Ke pointed at the returned-back-to-life turtle as it had been fed earlier.

“Present it to the Shaman?”

The Shaman was in no lack of food, then why would he care for that turtle?

However, soon enough, Shao Xuan realized the true meaning of Old Ke’s words. He was thinking that this turtle had good values, for it represented longevity and immortality as Shao Xuan just said before.

Shao Xuan didn't know what turtles represented in this world. But in his past life, many people did regard turtles as the symbol of immortal life. Let alone that this turtle indeed had a tenacious vitality. It had been placed in the crock for such a long time, that it no longer had the strength to peck on the walls. Or, he would have escaped already from the stone crock.

Shao Xuan recalled his memories when they first captured the turtle. Lang Ga had tortured his prey in the fish fence for some time, and then brought the turtle to Shao Xuan. It had then been starved for nearly half a year. If you do the calculations, you'll find that it literally didn't have much to eat. However, the turtle survived, which convinced Old Ke that Shao Xuan wasn't wrong when he said that the turtle represented longevity and immortality.

People in the tribe always felt that they should present the things which symbolized good things to highly respected individuals, and of course, Old Ke held the same attitude. Since Shao Xuan would be learning from the Shaman, Old Ke regarded it as an honor. So, it made total sense to present the Shaman with a turtle that represented immortal life.

Seeing that Old Ke was persistent, Shao Xuan didn't try to eat it anymore. After all, they were in no lack of food.

"Okay, then I'll give it to the Shaman when I go to the mountaintop next time." Said Shao Xuan.

Old Ke smiled at Shao Xuan's word, "We should keep it properly until then."

Old Ke thought that anything that would be presented to the Shaman must be in its best condition, as it was a gesture of their good faith.

So, after about ten days of a well-provided life, Shao Xuan grasped the turtle's back, and carried it to the mountaintop, with its stomach facing the sky.

On the mountaintop.

The Shaman was sitting in the stone room, recording something on an animal skin roll with a pen made from animal hair. He was a little curious when Shao Xuan said that he had some food to present. After all, it had been already some days since Shao Xuan's hunting team came back. What would he have now to present?

The Shaman placed his pen on the side. He looked at the turtle which was in Shao Xuan's hand and he was about to say something.

But the Shaman's old face sudden twisted a little, as he swallowed the words he was about to say.

In the past, when other people in the tribe presented food to the Shaman, the food would be meat bulks, which had already been processed, neat and clean. However, Shao Xuan brought him a whole turtle, an alive one with eagle-hooked mouth, and there were still wood chips at the corners of its mouth.

Obviously, the turtle had great destructive power. As it was brought in by Shao Xuan, a clear murderous look could be seen on its face, as if it was prepared to bite on anything that was in front of its eyes.



# Chapter 97 – That turtle

---

Translated by Sunyancai

“So, what are you...”

The Shaman looked at Shao Xuan, a little speechless, for he did not know what was the right thing to say in this situation. He had not received any living things for many years.

“It’s a present for your honor!”

Shao Xuan placed the turtle on the ground at the corner. On second thought, he decided to place it with its back on the ground. So, every time when it tried to turn over, the Shaman would just have to spin it back with a finger.

“I’m dropping it off here, and by the way, when should I come learn herbalism from you?” asked Shao Xuan.

The Shaman looked back as his eyes were fixed on the upturned turtle earlier. He thought about it and said, “You should come to the mountaintop in ten days.” He had a lot things on his plate recently, for some matters needed to be processed, and he had to draw many pictures on the animal skin roll. But he would be less busy after ten days.

“Alright, then I’ll come in ten days.” Seeing that the Shaman had a lot of blank animal skin rolls on the table, Shao Xuan knew that the Shaman had a lot of things to take care of. He said no more and excused himself after a decent salute. As for the turtle... it won’t be able to harm anyone since someone was guarding at the Shaman’s place.

When Shao Xuan had left, the Shaman silently stared at the turtle on the

ground which had just turned itself over.

The turtle with murderous look was no longer behaving like a savage animal as it was in Shao Xuan's cabin. Now, it opened its eagle-hooked mouth a little, staring at the Shaman with no other move.

The Shaman kept staring at the turtle for some time, and then called the guard to come inside, to take the turtle to another place.

Old Ke was waiting for Shao Xuan, when Shao Xuan came home that day. Old Ke seemed quite nervous. People in the tribe all valued the Shaman's attitude a lot, so Old Ke wanted to know whether the Shaman was satisfied when he received such a unique present from Shao Xuan.

"How are things going? Did the Shaman like it?" Before Shao Xuan could enter the door, Old Ke asked hastily. The blue veins on his hand became more obvious than before because he was clutching his cane pretty hard out of nervousness. The cane was about to break...

Shao Xuan recalled the Shaman's facial expression and then answered, "I think he is satisfied. He asked me to go to him in ten days."

Old Ke was finally relieved hearing Shao Xuan's words. Since the Shaman asked Shao Xuan to go to the mountaintop, it meant that he had no dissatisfaction towards Shao Xuan.

In fact, Shao Xuan felt that Old Ke's concerns were not that necessary. Over time, he got to know the Shaman's personality deeper than before. Although they did not have many long conversations, Shao Xuan could feel that the Shaman was not someone with an ancient mind, who knew nothing about change and progress. Also, he would not alter his attitude towards people based on the presents they sent him.

"Since you still have ten days, you should learn a thing or two about the herbs from the warriors in the other hunting team, before you go to the mountaintop. The Shaman will be delighted if you learned something in advance." Old Ke had planned to go and visit some of his old pals in the hunting team who knew a thing or two about herbs. However, the pals he knew were all in the other hunting team right now, and they had been out for days. By the time, they come back, Shao Xuan would already be at the mountaintop.

Normally speaking, the animals and ferocious beasts in the forests had a wave-shaped activeness. When the two moons were full moons and overlapped another, it would reach the highest peak. However after that, there would be less and less animals that were active in the forest. By the end of the year, some animals hid in some places, preparing to hibernate. So, to make sure that they had enough food to survive the winter, the hunting team would go hunting for a longer time when it got near the end of the year.

Because of that, the other hunting team might not be able to come back even after twenty days. When Shao Xuan goes to the mountaintop, he would have to wait for another three or four days for them to come back. If something unpredictable happened on the road, it might take them longer.

“Then, I can’t help you in herbalism.” Old Ke had already forgotten most of the things he knew about herbs. He worried that if he taught Shao Xuan the wrong thing, Shao Xuan would be humiliated in front of the Shaman. It was the Shaman that he was going to face!

However, Shao Xuan had no such nervousness or anxiety as Old Ke, and he behaved just like normal. He did stone crafting, and trained Caesar and Chacha as usual in the training ground. Also, he kept learning and practicing the skills of setting traps.

During the season, many trees on the hills around the training ground had fruits on the branches, and many people would go and collect them. Many fruits had a short maturation period. One day before, it was only a peanut-sized green fruit, and the second day, it would grow into an apple-sized colorful fruit. If you did not pick it, it would rot the next day.

So, many people would go to the training ground just to collect the fruits. Most of them were residents from the mountain foot district. After all, they had a relatively short storage of food, so it was always better to have more food prepared before winter comes.

Finally, the day came when Shao Xuan ought to go to the mountaintop. Before he set off, Old Ke urged him again and again to not upset the Shaman, and be careful during the learning process. It was such a great honor to learn from the Shaman, so never to be careless!

Regardless of his true feelings at heart, Shao Xuan nodded seriously, “You just rest assured!”

Old Ke became totally speechless: “...”

He was about to feel relieved, but at that sentence, his heart was in turmoil again. Looking at Shao Xuan’s back as he headed up to the mountaintop, Old Ke was extremely worried.

Shao Xuan did not take Caesar with him, but Chacha followed him all the way to the mountaintop.

When he arrived in front of the door of the stone house that the Shaman used for meeting with other people, Shao Xuan saw the two guards staring at the sky.

Naturally, the two guarding warriors knew that eagle hovering in the sky, after all, it was taken to the Shaman and blessed by him since infancy. No one dared to harm him.

Shao Xuan made a gesture to the sky, and Chacha let out a cry before flying down home.

It was not the two guarding warriors’ first time seeing Shao Xuan do that. But every time they saw it, they would feel sincerely surprised and admire it. They had never thought about keeping a ferocious bird from the forest and making it behave like that. Because of that, they had a much gentler attitude towards Shao Xuan than they had towards most of people living below. They would even smile when they saw Shao Xuan coming.

Aside from the first few times, Shao Xuan now did not have to show his patterned pallet before he could be allowed to enter the house. No one would stop him from going inside now.

The Shaman was still sorting out the animal skin rolls. Shao Xuan glimpsed at them, but he could not recognize them. There seemed to be pictures on them, but the figures were too abstract. They were much simpler than the pictures on the animal skin rolls, and the pictures on the stone wall in the orphan cave. They looked more like symbols. Each one of the pictures only had one or two

strokes. However, the Shaman was painting real slow, as if it took him a lot of strength to complete even one stroke.

Shao Xuan did not disturb the Shaman, and he sat beside him upon arriving.

After about five minutes, the Shaman finally dropped the pen and took a long breath. He looked at Shao Xuan with a light smile, "I've talked with Gui Ze. You should go to the medicine house directly, and she will inform you what to do next."

Shao Xuan had no idea who this Gui Ze was, and he assumed that she was one of the Shaman's apprentices. Under the current situation, the Shaman did not seem to be able to leave the stone house. The picture was only one-third complete, and quitting half way was not a good option. Shao Xuan understood that the Shaman was in the middle of his things.

"Okay, then I'll go there." Said Shao Xuan.

The medicine house was the special place to mix the herbs. There were many houses built near the mountaintop, and four of the houses were on the top. They were: The house that the Shaman used for meetings, the house that the Chief used for meetings, the house that served as the general office of the tribal leaders, and the medicine house.

These four stone houses were separated in four directions, and if you connected the opposite stone houses, you would draw a cross.

It was said that the four houses were connected with the fire pit, and they were warm even during winter times. As for how they were connected with the fire pit, it was a secret between the Shaman and the Flame.

Normally, aside from severely sick people and the badly wounded warriors, no one would ever go close to the medicine house. Shao Xuan only knew the exact location of the medicine house, but he had never entered it.

There was someone guarding in front of the medicine house. When Shao Xuan handed him his patterned pallet, the man let him in. Obviously, he was told to do so by the Shaman.

You could smell the scent of medicine from far away, and the smell grew stronger when you approached.

Shao Xuan walked inside as he lifted the animal skin curtain.

There was a square giant stone table in the middle of the house. A young girl was busy sorting different kinds of herbs in front of the table.

The sleeves of that animal skin top that she was wearing were just over her elbows, and the animal skin pants also did not reach her ankles. She was barefoot, walking on the uneven but carefully hardened soil ground, placing different kinds of herbs in the right locations along the stone table.

Behind her, a turtle that Shao Xuan was particularly familiar with was following her steps slowly. When she made a step forward, the turtle would do the exact same thing.

[Let me stop you right there. Take off those pink glasses. There is no romance here.

Also, I said it before, but that turtle is kyuuute!]

# Chapter 98 – The pictures in the animal skin rolls

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan placed the animal skin curtain down and greeted her: “Hi, my name is Ah-Xuan, and I’m here to learn from the Shaman.”

The person dealing with the herbs on that stone plate looked up at Shao Xuan and then smiled: “My name is Gui Ze.”

Although she was smiling, Shao Xuan didn’t feel much kindness or welcoming from the smile, but she didn’t seem to have any malice either. Just like the Shaman, she smiled at everyone in a gentle way, but only for appearances.

Well, the Shaman had an excellent apprentice. They had the exact type of smile.

Compared with other warriors whose totem power had awakened, Gui Ze was relatively slender. After all, no matter boys or girls, anyone who had awakened their totem power would have a stronger physique. Therefore they would look stronger in terms of appearance.

It was warmer inside, just like everyone in the tribe said that this medicine house was connected with the fire pit. Shao Xuan didn’t know how the heat got transported to here, for there was nothing spectacular or suspicious in the room.

Shao Xuan walked towards the stone table and asked: “What should I do first?”

Gui Ze dropped the stone plate that she had in her hand and thought for a

moment: “You can just stand there and watch what I do.”

“Sure.” Shao Xuan had no problem with that. He needed to watch and learn first, for he had no idea how to process these herbs.

All the plants were totally alien to Shao Xuan, but just as what Shao Xuan had learnt about herbs during his last life, most of the medical plants needed to be selected and processed, before they could be used on people.

One plant might have different effects on different parts. Some parts of it might save people’s lives, while the other parts might make things worse, or even take people’s lives.

However, now all Shao Xuan knew about herbs was the basic usage of the common-seen plants and herbs that he had encountered during his hunting trips with the team. When he was a part of the advance group, he learnt a thing or two about picking up rare plants. For example, when the proper time was to pull out the plant, what kind of plants had their valuable parts above the ground, what kind of plants needed to be pulled up as a whole, and what kind of plants could only be collected when they blossomed.

As for now, the first thing that Shao Xuan should know about was how to select them out, and when the herbs should be delivered to the medicine house.

Gui Ze was doing that right now, and she was half-done. After all, it had been over twenty days since the last hunting team returned. The short preservation life plants had long been processed, and the plants with long preservation life would be processed in the end.

Shao Xuan walked closer and stood by Gui Ze’s side, so that he might have a clearer look at how she processed the plants during each step.

The turtle approached Shao Xuan in silence, and suddenly, it bit on Shao Xuan’s leg.

Shao Xuan’s eyes were fixed on Gui Ze’s moves on processing the plants, and he did not care for the turtle beside him. However, his hand quickly moved, and pulled out his stone knife. Without hesitation, he stabbed towards its eagle-hooked mouth with the back of the stone knife.



“Ba!”

The turtle got struck, but it waved its head, and still looked at Shao Xuan in an unfriendly way. Perhaps it still held a grudge, and it remembered how it was treated by Shao Xuan.

However, to Shao Xuan’s surprise, that turtle did not try to bite him again, which was totally different from his behavior back down the mountain in that old broken stone crock. Back then, it would fight till the last minute when it had an object.

Shao Xuan was a little confused. The turtle was a biter, but why was it calm in here? Because of the Shaman? How peculiar!

No matter what, it saved Shao Xuan a lot of trouble, since that turtle was not obsessed with biting people.

Now it was almost winter time, and the temperature dropped as well. In Shao Xuan’s previous world, the standard turtles would eat less and become lazier than ever. However, that odd-looking turtle with an even more bizarre character had totally upturned Shao Xuan’s original understanding of nature.

It looked pretty vigorous, and was much more vivid than when it was left in the stone crock, trying hard to survive. Although it wasn’t moving fast, the steps it made were very energetic.

“Some rare plants brought by the hunting teams could be eaten raw. When they are delivered in here, they would normally have impurities attached, such as mud and dirt...”

Gui Ze would also explain the basic knowledge to Shao Xuan as she was processing the herbs on the stone plate.

Regarding the newly-brought plants and herbs, some of them had high water content aside from the impurities such as mud and dirt. If not processed in time, they would go bad. Sometimes, they became moldy like normal food, and sometimes they would have special changes. So, whenever the advance group returned, they would deliver the plants here as soon as possible. Someone in the medicine house would quickly process the ones that were the quickest to go

bad.

“When you roughly clean and wash the newly-brought plants, and then sort them out based on different species, you need to know that some of their non-medical parts must be removed. For example, this is the palpus fruit, and you have to remove its outer layer. The outer layer may cause diarrhea.”

People in the tribe were pretty strong, especially the totem warriors. If the palpus fruit could cause diarrhea to residents in the tribe, and even totem warriors couldn't survive, then it was very much toxic.

Shao Xuan saw Gui Ze skillfully slice off the outer layer of the palpus fruit with a sharp stone knife. She peeled off the layer with the beard-like long hairs, without harming any of the translucent jelly-like flesh. Obviously, Gui Ze was very practiced in processing it.

Shao Xuan wanted to ask how to deal with the peeled toxic layer after it had been processed. But before he could open his mouth, he saw Gui Ze toss the peeled toxic layer towards the turtle's open mouth, as it was already waiting with its mouth open.

Shao Xuan was speechless, “.....”

What the fuck! Wasn't that supposed to be toxic?!

One of them was tossing naturally, and the other was eating as if it was supposed to do so.

Shao Xuan was totally stunned at the scene.

The Shaman left this turtle in the medicine house so that the turtle could serve as a lab rat? Or as a garbage disposal bin?

Gui Ze did not realize Shao Xuan's astonishment. Because she wanted to demonstrate different kinds of procedures, so she did not continue to process the same thing. Instead, she walked towards another stone plate, and held up a plant which already seemed to be dried. She continued, “Not all plants need to be peeled, for example, this one needs to have its stem and stalk removed, for those parts might numb people's hands and feet.”

Shao Xuan saw her rapidly remove the stem and stalk, and then, again, tossed

the waste parts into the turtle's mouth.

Shao Xuan: "....."

Seeing the turtle's chewing mouth, Shao Xuan said to himself...severe diarrhea? Numb hands and feet?! All those toxic parts went strictly into the turtle's belly!

Moreover, the turtle seemed just fine!

"Why did you feed it with all those toxic parts?" asked Shao Xuan.

He sent the turtle to the Shaman, assuming that the Shaman would ask someone to stew it for supper. Unexpectedly, it was delivered to the medicine house, and behaved just like a pet. The thing that surprised Shao Xuan the most was that Gui Ze really cut off the toxic parts of plants and fed them to this turtle! And the turtle ate them all happily.

"The Shaman said that I can try feeding it with that." Gui Ze did not feel anything wrong. Since the Shaman had said it, the thing must be right, and all she needed to do was to follow the Shaman's command.

It was indeed the undying creature. Now Shao Xuan had a deeper understanding of this exotic specimen.

He followed Gui Ze, taking a tour around the stone table, and watched her process different kinds of plants at the table preliminarily. After that, Gui Ze continued on her work.

After watching for some time, Shao Xuan asked when Gui Ze was not that busy, "Are there any kind of documents, like animal skin rolls, that I could read?"

After all, the plants and herbs were precious things brought back by the advance group, so they could not be processed by someone as novice as Shao Xuan, even if the processing procedures were simple, only if the Shaman gave his agreement. Gui Ze could not decide for the Shaman, so Shao Xuan could not lend her a hand even if he wanted to.

Gui Ze thought about it, and she agreed with Shao Xuan's idea. Back when she started learning, she learnt from the pictures and records on the animal skin

rolls to know the basic knowledge of plants. Only after that, did she learn directly from the Shaman. However, she did have a better environment of learning, for someone walked her through all the animal skin rolls. Indeed, she would like to help Shao Xuan with the reading, but unfortunately, she still had a lot of plants that required immediate process.

Gui Ze said as she pointed at the animal skin rolls laid on a small stone desk in the corner, "They are all over there, and you can read them first."

"Then I'll get started. You should go back to your work. I'll ask you for help if there's something difficult to understand."

Shao Xuan came in front of the stone desk, and he found that most of the animal skin rolls seemed to be very old, while at the end there were some relatively new. They should have been made in this year.

Shao Xuan took an old animal skin roll and opened it.

There were plants with their pictures and simple demonstrations. The note was not very detailed, so were the pictures.

How to identify different kinds?

In the views of outsiders, when you looked at those paintings, you would feel that four out of ten kinds looked similar! They were nothing but leaves, roots, grass and seeds! All the same!

The pictures were in one color, and they were painted quite roughly. And the notes were not detailed either. Without the real fruit to look at, and no one to explain, one could only have limited understanding of those plants on the animal skin roll.

Shao Xuan read a few old animal skin rolls continuously, and knew that they were in the same style. After confirming that, Shao Xuan looked at a relatively new one. That animal skin roll was in much better quality than the others.

However, Shao Xuan became totally stunned when he opened the animal skin roll and had a look at its content.

If you said that the earlier pictures on the animal skin rolls were painted roughly, then the pictures on this one should be called crude doodles. Just like

the symbols that the Shaman was painting, no one could ever understand what these pictures were about.

Staring at one of the ink masses on the animal skin roll, Shao Xuan suspected, perhaps, it was a drop of pigment dropped by the Shaman while he was doing the painting.

However, unexpectedly, in the next second, Shao Xuan felt like that he was seeing some round brown fruit gradually revealing itself from the picture.

# Chapter 99 – The Shaman Volumes

---

Translated by Sunyancai

Shao Xuan was stunned, so he moved away his sight and looked elsewhere. Moments later, he looked at the animal skin roll again, and looked at those symbols.

However, when he stared at that ink mass for some time, the brown fruit revealed itself again. Very sharp and clear, just like a regular fruit, it presented in front of him. He could see all the details, such as the folds of the pericarp.

What was all that?!

In the past, Shao Xuan would only have those phantom visions when he was in a dangerous situation or on special occasions. But now, it was neither dangerous, nor was there a special scene like the Green Thief's nightmarch. He was merely standing in the medicine house. If the location was the cause of his phantom vision, then why did it take him so long to cause visions?

The animal skin roll was abnormal.

Shao Xuan stopped looking at that ink mass that he had been staring at, but changed to another picture.

Soon, Shao Xuan realized that other pictures were similar as the first ink mass. When he kept staring at them for some time, the real object would gradually emerge from the symbolic paintings, sharp and clear.

Shao Xuan saw many medical plants and herbs in this animal skin roll, including the Wind Ball and Green Thief that the advance group brought back while he was a member of them. Besides them, there were some other odd-

looking herbs.

The thing that surprised Shao Xuan the most, was the accuracy of the pictures. For example, the Wind Ball and the Green Thief were captured with a trap. Unavoidably, there were some remaining traces, caused by the ropes. Shao Xuan personally set the traps and caught these two sneaky plants, of course he could recognize them at first sight. The pictures in the animal skin roll had those exact two things! The traces and marks on their bodies were exactly the same as in Shao Xuan's memory!

It was truly a real object representation!

He moved on to other pictures. There were not only plants, but also animals on the animal skin roll.

In fact, the first half of the animal skin roll had pictures of plants, while the latter half of the animal skin roll had pictures of animals. However, no matter which kind it was, there were only simple symbolic paintings without description of how these creatures were obtained or processed.

When he went through the animal medicines part, Shao Xuan could only see the final products, without understanding how they were processed, or what part of the animal's body they were from. The comments on their sides were very simple, so it was impossible for Shao Xuan to have a better understanding of them.

Shao Xuan opened and read some other animal skin rolls on the stone desk. However, aside from the one that he was holding in his hand, the other animal skin rolls were all very plain. Obviously, the painters of the other animal skin rolls tried very hard to describe the details of the objects. However, due to limited painting skills, Shao Xuan could not see the exact image of the real fruit. It was far more different than the real-object-representation.

Shao Xuan recalled the time earlier, when he was inside the Shaman's stone house. He saw the Shaman painting. At first sight, Shao Xuan assumed them to be simple symbols. However, it took the Shaman quite a lot of strength to make every stroke. Now, combined with the knowledge from the animal skin roll in his hand, Shao Xuan had a speculation in his mind.

He waited until Gui Ze had finished processing the herbs in one stone plate,

and then come to her with the special animal skin roll, “Is this one made by the Shaman himself?”

Gui Ze looked aside and saw Shao Xuan with the animal skin roll in his hand. Earlier she was quite calm, but immediately she became very nervous. She walked towards Shao Xuan quickly, and had a close look at the animal skin roll before she said anything. Gui Ze was relieved when she saw that animal skin roll remained unscratched.

She wanted to take over the animal skin roll and place it back where it was, to prevent any damage to it. However, on second thought, she remembered that it was the Shaman who told Shao Xuan to come and learn. So, she hesitated, and then finally withdrew her hand.

“It is indeed written by the Shaman himself, and it was made only this year... You...you should be extra careful when reading that. Do not damage it in any way!” Gui Ze stared at the animal skin roll in Shao Xuan’s hand, and said in a serious tone, “The Shaman would read it every time he comes. He will be angry if he sees it damaged.”

Naturally, Shao Xuan understood in his heart how much people in the tribe valued the Shaman.

Shao Xuan answered as he nodded, “I get it. And I will be very careful with it.” [You just rest assured! *cough*]

“By the way, have you read it as well?” Shao Xuan lifted the animal skin roll in his hand and asked.

Gui Ze smiled at that question, and she answered with pure admiration in her eyes, “This is written by the Shaman, so only he could read its content. Whoever else would only see chaos and mass.”

She assumed that Shao Xuan was like her, and that he would not understand a thing from the animal skin roll either. When she entered the medicine house for the first time, she had seen similar animal skin rolls. However, it was said that these kinds of animal skin roll belonged to the Shaman, and the Shaman only. They were totally different from the normal ones.

“They are called the Shaman Volumes. So only the Shaman could understand



their content. You won't understand it, just change to another animal skin roll." When Gui Ze finished explaining, she went back to the big stone table to process different plants. There were still a few stone plates full of herbs that required to be processed soon. Moreover, the other hunting team was about to come back, so she needed to accelerate her process. She did not have much time to talk with Shao Xuan.

When Gui Ze went back to her work, Shao Xuan looked down at the animal skin roll he had at hand, and whispered, "The Shaman Volumes?"

He did not try to explain his situation when Gui Ze misunderstood him. Nor would he ever argue with Gui Ze that he could indeed read and understand the content of this animal skin roll, and beg her pardon...

The Shaman Volumes? And only the Shaman could read them? Who said that?

Shao Xuan shook his head, and grabbed a wooden chair. He sat on the chair and opened the animal skin roll carefully on the stone desk, so that he could continue reading all those paintings on it. Earlier, he roughly went through a few pictures and there were still a lot of other ones. Even when the notes weren't in detail, he could have some understanding of the pictures if he read them for some time. Perhaps he would encounter one or two of them when he went out for hunting missions later?

It must be because of the Shaman that the animal skin roll got the name of Shaman Volume.

The paintings made by the Shaman were completely different from the ones made by the others. When doing the paintings, it was highly likely that the Shaman used some special power to combine his consciousness with the ink. So even simple strokes had many secrets contained inside.

If any regular person could see the meaning of these symbolic paintings, then why would Ta and the others have animal skin roll with regular paintings? Of course, the paintings given to the hunting group leaders were made especially for normal people, so that they could understand the content.

When it was late in the afternoon, Shao Xuan left the medicine house, for he would not be spending the night in here.

Not long after Shao Xuan had left, the Shaman came to the medicine house.

Gui Ze reported the results of her work in the afternoon in a respectful way, and the Shaman smiled, “Good. You’ve done a lot lately.”

One old man and one young lady in the room, sharing the same facial expression. It was just that Gui Ze seemed more delightful because of the Shaman’s compliment.

After asking things about the herbs, the Shaman asked, “How was Shao Xuan behaving today?”

“I taught him the basic picking and processing of the plants, and then he spent the afternoon reading animal skin rolls by the stone desk.” Gui Ze briefed today’s things to the Shaman and pointed at the stone desk in the corner, “He also read your animal skin roll. Just like me in old times, he could not understand, so he was confused.”

The Shaman’s face slightly changed for a moment. However, the change was too fast for Gui Ze to capture.

“How long had he been reading that animal skin roll?” asked the Shaman.

“Almost half a day.” And he even yawned. Gui Ze kept the latter part of the sentence to herself, for she feared the Shaman might be angry about it.

The Shaman was in silence for some time, and then said slowly, “Just leave him be. You go on with your tasks. The hunting team is about to come back. Pack three packs of herbs first.”

“Yes.”

The next day, when Shao Xuan went to the medicine house again, Gui Ze was still very busy at the big stone table. Shao Xuan stood by her side and watched for some time. He helped with the moving, and watched some of the primary processing methods of some new plants. After watching Gui Ze work for some time, he turned to look at other things. He looked around the room, and his eyesight stopped when he noticed that there was another new animal skin roll

on the stone desk around the corner. It looked quite similar to the one that he read yesterday, regarding the material and look.

Shao Xuan picked up the new animal skin roll, and opened it. All he saw were indeed simple symbols just like the ones he saw yesterday. However, in this new animal skin roll, there were series of images instead of individual images.

In this new Shaman Volume, there were the whole processing methods of eight different medicinal plants recorded. From the selection of treatment, to cooking, from drying to storage, there were detailed descriptions on them all. Seeing those images, Shao Xuan felt that he saw a pair of weathered hands processing and demonstrating all the procedures in front of him.

After a series of symbolic pictures, there were also comments in words.

When you combined the images with the words, it became very clear and profound.

# Chapter 100 – Do you want to be the Shaman?

---

Translated by Sunyancai

It was not only that day. Every day after that, Shao Xuan would find a new roll of Shaman Volumes lying on the stone desk in the corner when he came to the medicine house.

The content varied from the basic picking and processing of medicinal plants, to how to lure and capture the animal-based medicine; from how to process the animals, to how to deal with the plants.

All of that was recorded on the animal skin rolls of the Shaman Volumes. Every time when Shao Xuan read them, he could see a series of real scenes reflected in his eyes.

Because the pictures on the new Shaman Volumes were all connected with each other instead of being individual like before, so when you read them together, you could see real scenes emerging out. Sometimes, Shao Xuan would even feel as if he himself moving, he could more or less sense its texture, the feel, the strength, etc...

The Shaman Volumes were all very precious. Obviously, the Shaman already knew that Shao Xuan could understand the content, since he brought out all those new ones for Shao Xuan to read.

The Shaman...well, you cannot keep any secrets from him.

And, the more and more Shaman Volumes on the stone desk made Shao Xuan have a clear understanding of the Shaman's attitude.

One day, when Shao Xuan was reading a roll of the Shaman Volumes by the corner, he heard someone running towards the medicine house while shouting, “Gui Ze! The Shaman asked for you! The hunting team has returned!”

There was a smaller house by the medicine house, which the Shaman used to keep the wounded to treat them. Every time when a hunting team returned, they would directly deliver the injured warriors to that smaller house. It was close to the medicine house, so it would save a lot of time to deliver the herbs. The Shaman could just get the herbs from the medicine house when he needed anything.

Gui Ze did not hesitate. She stopped what she had been doing and went to the Shaman directly. As for Shao Xuan...he was not allowed to go inside the treatment room. Anyone who had not been allowed could not enter, in case of disturbing the treatment.

Shao Xuan felt a little sorry. He wanted to see how the Shaman treated the wounded warriors. But all he could do was to sit in the medicine house and wait, since he was prevented from entering the treatment room.

Gui Ze ran back to the medicine house soon after she left, and she grabbed a few packs of herbs to go. After half a minute, there she was again.

“The bitter shagen, the seven forks, the palpus fruit, the heart piercing stem...”

Gui Ze took out some herbs from the stone pots and wooden boxes as she was murmuring the names of the herbs.

Seeing that she was in such a hurry, Shao Xuan guessed that perhaps there were more wounded warriors delivered to the treatment room this time than they expected. The mixed herbs were in a shortage, so Gui Ze had to make them on the spot, since the packs she made in advance were not enough.

Gui Ze did not need a scale to do the mixing. She could just grab a handful of the herbs, and there would be almost no difference in the dosages of several processed drugs. Shao Xuan had watched her do that for days.

Such skill could not be obtained within a short period. Perhaps, the Shaman had been training Gui Ze since her childhood.

All the residents in the tribe assumed that the herb packs were mixed by the Shaman himself. Now it seems that quite a lot of them must be made by Gui Ze.

“Need any help?” asked Shao Xuan.

Gui Ze wanted to refuse at first, but on second thought, she nodded. However, she did not ask Shao Xuan to directly process those herbs, Instead, she asked him to help her carry stuff.

“What’s going on? Lack of herb packs? Are there a lot of wounded warriors this time?” asked Shao Xuan.

“There are nine of them.” Answered Gui Ze.

Of course, only the badly wounded warriors would be sent back first. Nine severely injured warriors... Indeed, the number was unusual, but fortunately, no one was killed.

“There are not enough heart piercing stems. Help me get the box that contains the heart piercing stems.” Gui Ze said in a hurry.

“Alright.”

Shao Xuan had remembered where the different kinds of herbs were located. So, he did not need Gui Ze to tell him, but directly brought back a huge wooden box.

The heart piercing stem belonged to a type of plant from the grassland. It was only the width of a little finger, and had a thin outer layer. On its inside, there was a black thin thread. The layer couldn’t be used, and the inner thin black thread was toxic as well. When processing the heart piercing stem, one had to peel the outer layer and extract the inner thread as well.

Although in a hurry, Gui Ze was well coordinated with her moves.

However, she was still not fast enough.

The heart piercing stem was very hard to process, and it would take a lot of time to process one piece. Shao Xuan had seen her process it, she needed at least half an hour to process each stem. Because of that, Gui Ze had sweat on her forehead. She was still holding the knife tightly, but she sped up, and the

work was not as perfect as normal. After all, she was in a hurry to save lives, so she'd rather use more materials in trade of saving the time to deliver the herbs to the Shaman.

Normally, the heart piercing stem was used to treat the severe inner wounds that exhausted the warriors' self-healing ability, which meant that these kinds of wounds were extremely dangerous. They required immediate treatment after the warriors were sent to the treatment room. So, all the drugs and herbs needed to be prepared in no time. One more minute's delay meant more danger than before.

Seeing that there were a few stems in the wooded box, Shao Xuan took one himself. He pinched on the stem gently, and he pinched along the spirals from bottom to top.

"You shouldn't touch..." Gui Ze was about to stop Shao Xuan when she realized what Shao Xuan was doing by her side, for he was a novice at this after all. However, she looked over at him, and then decided to swallow what she wanted to say after seeing the scene.

She saw Shao Xuan quickly finish the pinching. He held the half-arm-length heart piercing stem with one hand, and a small stone knife in his other hand.

The knife was especially made by Shao Xuan from a fine stone core. The stone core was sent by the Shaman earlier this year, when Shao Xuan had made a major contribution to the tribe. It was not a big one, for the finer the stone core was, the harder it would be to obtain it. After crafting some small stoneware, Shao Xuan kept the rest of the stone core. On his first day in the medicine house when he saw Gui Ze use a small stone knife to peel a herb, he made himself a similar one with the remaining stone core.

The fine stone core was not easy to craft, so it took him a few days to finish the work. Unexpectedly, it was in use on the first day that Shao Xuan carried it with him.

The small stone knife moved up and down a few times, and then got pulled back. Like peeling a banana, Shao Xuan peeled the heart piercing stem's layer from one end to another. It went very smoothly!

It was nothing like earlier when Gui Ze tried hard to peel the heart piercing

stem.

Gui Ze just stared at him, totally forgot what she should be doing. She kept her eyes wide open, staring at Shao Xuan's every move.

When Shao Xuan peeled the layer near the other end, he should just cut the small part near the end, together with the layer, if he did it as Gui Ze's demonstration. As for the inner thread, normally Gui Ze would slit the stem into two parts from bottom to top, and then carefully excavate the thread out.

However, Shao Xuan did no such thing. When he got near the other end, he squeezed on the end while twisting it softly. After a gentle pull, a black thin thread got pulled out, together with the peeled layer.

Gui Ze was stunned, "....."

She now did not have any facial expression on her face.

It was not like she hadn't tried the same thing. But exactly because she had tried it before, did she realise how hard it was to just pull out the black inner thread. However, just in front of her own eyes, a novice apprentice did it perfectly, as if he had practiced it a thousand times. All the moves were as fluent as ever, without even one single hesitation!

In fact, Shao Xuan did not know as well why he could process that so flawlessly on his first time.

It felt like...an instinct. It was not Shao Xuan's own instinct, but the instinct he got after reading the Shaman Volumes. It was transferred from the Shaman Volumes to himself, like a consciousness of instinct. When he was processing the stem, it was like someone whispered in his ears about what to do next, and how he should do it.

The whole set of actions were almost complete copies of the scene that he read on the animal skin roll, about how to process the heart piercing stem.

With Shao Xuan added to the workflow, the herb packs were quickly finished. Gui Ze grabbed the herb packs and ran out, leaving Shao Xuan and that turtle in the medicine house looking at each other.

[I bet that turtle totally is thinking about biting Shao Xuan.]



After about two hours, the Shaman came. He looked quite tired. Gui Ze stayed behind to look after the wounded warriors, and did not come back with the Shaman.

When the Shaman entered, Shao Xuan was feeding the turtle with the wastes.

“How’re things over there?” asked Shao Xuan as he passed a cup of water to the Shaman.

The Shaman sat on a wooden chair and sipped on the water. Momentarily, he answered, “It’s good.”

That meant that the wounded ones were in no critical situation now. Shao Xuan continued feeding the turtle with the wastes.

The Shaman stared at Shao Xuan for some time. Earlier, Gui Ze had told him about how Shao Xuan perfectly processed the heart piercing stems. He was not surprised at all. Glancing on the animal skin rolls on the stone desks and the stone table, he pleasantly but sternly called Shao Xuan, “Ah-Xuan.”

“Yes?”

“Do you want to be the Shaman?”

“No, I don’t.”

The Shaman’s heart immediately shattered in pieces at his firm “No”...  
[Someone call for the Shaman, someone’s having a heart attack here! Oh wait...]

**Publisher:**

---

**TooLate**

**From doswap**

